

A Roman *cathedra episcopalis* from the Era of Pope Hadrian I

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Abstract

Among the liturgical furnishings that have survived from the early medieval period, a complete episcopal throne is a true rarity. This article examines a marble papal throne that appeared on the antiquities market in Rome in the late 1930s and is now in private hands. This cathedra is remarkable not only for its excellent state of preservation, but also for the refined sculptural decoration on its back and arms. Considering the decorative scheme as a whole, and the sculptural techniques in particular, it is likely that the throne was produced during the papacy of Hadrian I (772–95) by a stone carvers' workshop in Rome, based at the church of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, which had been rebuilt in those years at the order of the pope himself. A comparison of archaeological data with church documents from the second half of the eighth century provides an idea of the role played by such thrones as a focal element in the program of stationary liturgy observed by the popes of that era. It is entirely plausible that this rare piece of furniture came from such an important church as Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, which was annexed to one of the city's most important deaconries. Its artistic merits open new perspectives on the state of the sculptural arts in Rome during the early phases of the so-called Carolingian Renaissance, while its great symbolic value justifies a reconsideration of the role of papal and imperial thrones in the early Middle Ages, starting with the "Cathedra of Saint Peter," which dates from the late Carolingian era.

In 1974, the archaeologist Letizia Pani Ermini published a substantial contribution to the literature on the carved *ciboria* of early medieval Rome (eighth and ninth centuries).¹ Among her examples were a

richly decorated marble throne and two rectangular slabs with reliefs, all bearing considerable resemblance to one another. These artifacts, unrecorded in the literature, were known only through two photographs in the photo archive of the German Archaeological Institute of Rome, taken by the photographer Cesare Faraglia in 1939 when they were on the art market in Rome (Figs. 1–2).² There were no further details about their provenance and, at the time of Pani Ermini's 1974 study, the whereabouts of the pieces remained unknown. With only slender documentation to go on, Pani Ermini nevertheless grasped the importance of the throne, seemingly the most intact and best preserved early medieval example of a type of liturgical furniture that will be described here as a *cathedra episcopalis*; she proposed a date in the first half of the ninth century. Pani Ermini emphasized the close resemblances in the iconography of the inter-related slabs, even suggesting that they had been created in the same workshop, along with a carved *transenna* (screen) relief from the presbytery screen of the church of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin in Rome (Fig. 13), a commission that is attributed by scholarly consensus to the time of Pope Hadrian I (772–95).³

The dating of the throne and the two slabs to the early Carolingian period and their link to the city of Rome were accepted by the few scholars who considered them in subsequent decades. Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro and Lidia Paroli cited the two slabs in two essays on the themes of late antique Roman sculpture and early medieval ecclesiastical furniture.⁴ Francesco Gandolfo referred briefly just to the *cathedra* in an article on episcopal thrones from Late Antiquity to

1. Letizia Pani Ermini, "Note sulla decorazione dei cibori a Roma nell'Alto Medioevo," *Bollettino d'Arte* 59 (1974): 115–26.

2. Rome, Photo Archive of the Istituto Archeologico Germanico, neg. no. 39.706 and neg. no. 39.707.

3. Pani Ermini, "Note sulla decorazione dei cibori," 121 and 122, figs. 26 and 35.

4. Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidari: dalla lettura stilistica all'analisi delle tecniche di produzione," in *Roma nell'Alto Medioevo. Atti della XLVIII Settimana di Studio del CISAM, Spoleto, 27 aprile–1 maggio 2000*, 2 vols. (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo [henceforth: CISAM], 2001), 1:393–420, at 403; Lidia Paroli, "La scultura a Roma tra il VI e il IX secolo," in *Roma dall'antichità al medioevo: archeologia e storia nel Museo Nazionale Romano–Crypta Balbi*, ed. Maria Stella Arena, Paolo Delogu, Lidia Paroli, Marco Ricci, Lucia Sagui, and Laura Vendittelli (Rome: Electa, 2001), 132–43, at 139.



Figure 1. Cathedra episcopalis in 1939, from the photo archive of the German Archaeological Institute of Rome, neg. 39.706 (photo: Cesare Faraglia).

the late Middle Ages.⁵ More intriguingly, as part of the new installation of the Crypta Balbi Museum in Rome, an explanatory panel in the room devoted to Byzantine and Carolingian sculpture displayed the 1939 photograph of the *cathedra* as the best-known example of an early medieval bishop's throne, with a caption proposing an attribution to a workshop active in Rome circa 800 (Fig. 7).⁶

In fact, the *cathedra* and the two related slabs belong to a single artifact, the slabs being the two arms of the throne (Fig. 3). The whole ensemble currently resides in a private collection, but the owner kindly enabled me to examine it thoroughly during a program of restoration in 2016; the results of this on-site study make it possible to account for every aspect of the object. Clearly, the *cathedra* is one of the outstanding artifacts of early medieval art in Rome and Italy, not least because of its fine state of preservation; the vast majority of the sculpture (both ecclesiastical furniture and architectural decoration) that once adorned Western

5. Francesco Gandolfo, "Cattedra," in *Enciclopedia dell'arte medioevale*, vol. 4 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1993), 496–505, at 500.

6. See the entry by Lidia Paroli, "Cattedra," in *Roma dall'antichità al medioevo*, no. IV.3.5, 489–91.



Figure 2. Exterior panels of the two armrests of the cathedra in 1939, from the photo archive of the German Archaeological Institute of Rome, neg. 39.707 (photo: Cesare Faraglia).

European churches between the fourth and tenth centuries has survived in more or less fragmentary form, having been salvaged for construction material as the evolution of the liturgy that started in the central Middle Ages imposed radical changes on the interiors of places of worship.⁷

From the closing decades of the nineteenth century to about 1950, artifacts of comparable complexity received the pioneering attention of Raffaele Cattaneo (1888), Ferdinando Mazzanti (1896), Rudolph Kautzsch (1939 and 1941), Paolo

7. See Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidici," 393–94 and 413–14; Sible de Blaauw, "Innovazioni nello spazio di culto fra basso Medioevo e Cinquecento: la perdita dall'orientamento liturgico e la liberazione della navata," in *Lo spazio e il culto: relazioni tra edificio ecclesiale e uso liturgico dal XV al XVII secolo. Atti delle Giornate di studio, Firenze, 27–28 marzo 2003*, ed. Jörg Stabenow (Venice: Marsilio, 2006), 25–52; idem, "Reception and Renovation of Early Christian Churches in Rome, c. 1050–1300," in *Rome across Time and Space: Cultural Transmissions and the Exchange of Ideas, c. 500–1400*, ed. Claudia Bolgia, Rosamond McKitterick, and John Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 151–66.



Figure 3. General view of the cathedra episcopalis, papacy of Hadrian I (772–95), private collection (photo: courtesy private collection).

Verzone (1945), and Gaetano Panazza (1954),⁸ but a turning point for understanding their significance came in 1959 with

8. Raffaele Cattaneo, *L'architettura in Italia dal secolo VI al mille circa: ricerche storico-critiche* (Venice: Tipografia Emiliana, 1888); Federico Mazzanti, "La scultura ornamentale romana nei tempi bassi," *Archivio Storico dell'Arte* ser. 2, no. 2 (1896): 33–57 and 161–85; Rudolf Kautzsch, "Die römische Schmuckkunst in Stein vom 6. bis zum 10. Jahrhundert," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 3 (1939): 1–73; idem, "Die langobardische Schmuckkunst in Oberitalien," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 5 (1941): 1–48; Paolo Verzone, *L'arte preromanica in Liguria ed i rilievi decorativi dei "secoli barbari"* (Turin: Viglono, 1945); Gaetano Panazza, "Lapid e scultura paleocristiane e pre-romaniche di Pavia," in *Arte del*

the first volume of the *Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, the first systematic collection of surviving material organized by place of origin.⁹ This enterprise has been flanked by other collections of a local character, such as the *Corpus della scultura paleocristiana, bizantina e altomedievale* of Ravenna (1968–69).¹⁰ The amount of data gradually becoming available, and the research being undertaken by the collaborators on these corpora have, in turn, proven a powerful stimulus for archaeologists and art historians who, over the last forty years, have been able to clarify timelines, identify the work of individual workshops, pinpoint techniques and tools, discover formal links between objects geographically remote from one another, and even identify individual artists.¹¹ At the same time, research has focused on the conceptual meaning of the themes represented and the ornamental motifs utilized by the craftsmen responsible, leading to a deeper understanding of these fascinating works.¹² Gradually, the perception that these ob-

primo millennio. Atti del II Convegno per lo studio dell'arte dell'Alto Medioevo, Pavia, settembre 1950, ed. Edoardo Arslan (Turin: Viglono, 1954), 211–96. See Antonella Ballardini, "Da ornamento a monumento: la scultura altomedievale nella storiografia del secondo Ottocento," in *Medioevo: immagine e memoria. Atti dell'XI Convegno internazionale di studi, Parma, 23–28 settembre 2008*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle (Milan/Parma: Electa, 2008), 109–26.

9. *Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, vols. 1–19 (Spoleto: CISAM, 1959–2015); citations in the following notes include publication date but not the city and publisher, which remain the same throughout for this *Corpus*. Rome and its hinterland are the subject of volume 7, of which tomes 1–7 have been published so far. For a preliminary judgment, see Silvana Casartelli Novelli, "Documento–monumento–testo artistico: orizzonte epistemologico della scultura altomedievale tra corpus e corpora," *Arte Medievale* ser. 2, no. 2 (1988): 1–28 (pt. 1), and 5, no. 2 (1991): 1–48 (pt. 2); and Silvana Casartelli Novelli, "Mario Salmi e il 'Corpus' di Spoleto," in Mario Salmi: *storico dell'arte e umanista. Atti della Giornata di studio, Roma, Palazzo Corsini, 30 novembre 1990* (Spoleto: CISAM, 1991), 17–25.

10. *Corpus della scultura paleocristiana, bizantina e altomedievale di Ravenna*, ed. Giuseppe Bovini, vols. 1–3 (Rome: De Luca, 1968–69).

11. Various summaries can be found in: Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidisti," 393–420; Roberto Coroneo, *Scultura altomedievale in Italia: materiali e tecniche di esecuzione, tradizione e metodi di studio* (Cagliari: Edizioni AV, 2005); Saverio Lomartire, "Commacini e marmorarii. Temi e tecniche della scultura tra VII e VIII secolo nella Langobardia Maior," in *I Magistri Commacini: mito e realtà del Medioevo lombardo. Atti del XIX Congresso internazionale di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, Varese-Como, 23–25 ottobre 2008* (Spoleto: Fondazione CISAM, 2009), 151–209.

12. See Angiola Maria Romanini, "Tradizione e 'mutazioni' nella cultura figurativa precarolingia," in *La cultura antica nell'Occidente latino dal VII all'XI secolo. Settimane di Studio del CISAM, 18–24 aprile 1974* (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1975), 2:759–807; eadem, "Scultura nella Langobardia Major: questioni storiogra-

jects were made by a primitive and clumsy, even barbaric workforce has given way to the consensus that they were instead a creative and sophisticated art form (despite significant variations in quality), and the expression of a society fully capable of shaping ideas, concepts, and values through both figurative and abstract imagery.

The fundamental work of collection and critical examination being accomplished by the *Corpus della scultura altomedievale* provides a solid foundation for study even of such a decontextualized artifact as the *cathedra* under discussion. Starting with its form, the marks left by the tools during production, and its decorative repertoire, numerous comparanda can now be assembled, including some of known date that indicate a similarly precise date for our *cathedra*. More importantly, however, an object of this symbolic value—a bishop's throne—also provides valuable insights into the historical period in which it was made, namely, those decades of the late eighth and early ninth centuries now considered a period of artistic and cultural renewal: in Italy, the final phase of Lombard rule; in Western Europe, the affirmation of the Carolingian monarchy; and in Rome, the birth of the temporal power of the Church.¹³ Finally, as will emerge from this study, although nothing is known about the original location of the *cathedra*, there is sufficient evidence to suggest a possible origin in one of the most famous monuments of early medieval Rome, and one that still exists today: Sta. Maria in Cosmedin.

Description

At present the *cathedra* consists of four elements of fine-grained white marble with gray veining that, upon scientific

fiche," *Arte Medievale* ser. 2a, 5, no. 1 (1991): 1–36; as well as the articles collected in Silvana Casartelli Novelli, *Segni e codici della figurazione altomedievale*, Testi, studi, strumenti 11 (Spoleto: CISAM, 1996).

13. The enormous bibliography includes: Richard Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City, 312–1308* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 89–142; Stefano Gasparri, "Il passaggio dai Longobardi ai Carolingi," in *Il futuro dei Longobardi: l'Italia e la costruzione dell'Europa di Carlo Magno*. Saggi, ed. Carlo Bertelli and Gian Pietro Brogiolo (Geneva/Milan: Skira, 2000), 25–43; and Manfred Luchterhandt, "Rinascita a Roma, nell'Italia carolingia e meridionale," in *Storia dell'architettura italiana: da Costantino a Carlo Magno*, ed. Sible De Blaauw, vol. 2 (Milan: Electa, 2010), 322–73. For a critical evaluation of the concept of renewal applied to Carolingian Rome, see Margherita Cecchelli, Alessandra Cerrito, Alessandra Milella, Silvia Orlandi, Andrea Ropeti, Alessandro Garrisi, and Claudio Carta, "L'assetto culturale della Roma carolingia," in *La cristianizzazione in Italia tra tardoantico ed alto medioevo. Atti del IX Congresso nazionale di Archeologia cristiana*, Agrigento, 20–25 novembre 2004, ed. Rosa Maria Bonacasa Carra and Emma Vitale (Palermo: Saladino, 2007), 375–481, especially at 375–85.

inspection, can be identified as Lunense marble. Originally, it must also have been supported on two lateral slabs, which raised it off the ground while simultaneously leaving open the front section below the seat: this can be deduced from the presence of holes along two sides of the lower face of the seat, near its lateral edges.

The seat (71.3 × 60 × 7.5 cm) is a single rectangular slab of plain marble. Its faces are smooth, except for the holes for interlocking with the pins protruding from the arms, from the supports, and from the wall against which the *cathedra* was evidently backed. There are four square holes at the corners of the top face, four more at the corners of the lower face, and two larger rectangular grooves at either end of the rear face. The surfaces are worn from prolonged rubbing, especially the top face and the front edge (the parts most exposed to wear), and there are chips at the corners and along the edges—a probable consequence of one or more reuses.

The backrest (87.8 × 71.5 × 7.8 cm), a rectangle surmounted by a triangular pediment, is carved with a Greek cross in the middle of the central field of the recto side. The arms of the cross are embellished with a motif of two interwoven triple-grooved bands, and each arm terminates in small curlicues at its two outer corners. Three floral elements fill the spaces above and around the upper arm: a four-leaf clover at the top; on the right, a rosette with six rounded petals inscribed in a circle; and on the left, a spiraling rosette. The spaces below the lateral arms are filled on the right by a bunch of grapes enclosed by a three-banded frame, and on the left by a pointed Solomon's knot. A continuous narrow braid identical to that on the arms of the cross runs along the sides and upper edges of the backrest, while a larger frame along the lower edge encloses two triple-grooved strips (roughly twice the width of the braid) loosely interwoven and terminating in bracketing straight sections at either end. Just below the roofline of the pediment is an ogee fillet, and two colonnettes with spiral fluting and smooth-leaved capitals flank the upper portion of the backrest above the level of the arms. The colonnettes rest on schematic rounded bases with square plinths underneath. Plain vertical sections extend below the colonnettes to the tops of the armrests, where two rectangular holes received the pins protruding from the latter. The rear of the backrest is smooth, except for four rectangular holes along the outer edges, at mid-height and near the lower edge: they must have held brackets jutting out from the wall against which the *cathedra* stood. Again, on this slab the edges and corners are chipped at several points, possibly due to reuse.

The right-hand armrest is rectangular in shape (Fig. 2, bottom; Fig. 4); both faces are bordered along the top and sides by a wide, flat cornice, while the bottom is closed by



Figure 4. *Peacocks drinking from a cantharus, exterior panel of the right-hand armrest of the cathedra episcopalis in Figures 1–3, 50.8 × 36.3 × 7 cm (photo: author).*



Figure 5. *Peacocks drinking from a cantharus, exterior panel of the left-hand armrest of the cathedra episcopalis in Figures 1–3, 50.6 × 36.5 × 7 cm (photo: author).*

a narrower sunken fillet. On the outside, two confronted peacocks drink from a *cantharus* that each holds with one clawed foot; the other foot rests on a horizontal branch or ground below which are triple-banded interlaced semicircular arches. While the surface of the *cantharus* is smooth, the bodies of the peacocks are carved with linear, curved, or rounded forms that delineate their anatomical details and plumage; a lily, set diagonally, fills the spaces in the upper left- and right-hand corners. The short side of the arm—the face visible when the *cathedra* is viewed frontally—is decorated with a slender vertical plant motif consisting of a stylized palm in which double pointed leaves alternate with double corollas with curling tips (Fig. 3). The inner side of the armrest is smooth, except for an elliptical cavity made during reuse, at which time the projecting pins must have been chiselled away. The height of the armrest, slightly lower than that of its counterpart, has lost some centimeters from its lower edge, evidently chiselled away at the time of its reuse. Perhaps on the same occasion the two rectangular holes at the ends of the upper side were made, unless they served for the insertion of decorative elements such as finials.

The left-hand armrest is identical in structure, but the scene figured on the outer face differs somewhat (Fig. 2, top; Fig. 5). As with its counterpart, two symmetrical peacocks are shown drinking from a *cantharus*, but each extends a clawed foot toward the vessel without touching it, resting the other foot on a slightly curved interwoven line (the ground?); in the space below are carved two palmettes with mirror-image leaves joined at the center by a flower with three petals. On the head of the right-hand peacock is a small Latin cross instead of the expected crest. The definition of the bodies is also different from those of the birds on the other armrest: the plumage is delineated by roundlets in relief, rather than

groups of lines; above the tail, the lenticular bodies end with an upward curl. Here, too, the upper corner spaces are filled by two lilies, while the palm leaves occupying the visible short side are almost identical. The slab was stripped of its protruding pins and chiselled along the bottom; it, too, has the two square holes at the ends of its upper side.

Until its recent restoration, the *cathedra*'s arms were joined to the backrest by means of decayed iron clamps inserted in the holes intended for the pins (as shown in the German Archaeological Institute photograph: Fig. 1). In fact, the reduction in the height of the armrests left part of the corresponding holes on the backrest uncovered. These clamps, which were foreign and detrimental to the marble, have now been eliminated, and the object has been properly mounted on a modern base to restore its original proportions and appearance (Fig. 3).

Tools and Carving Techniques

The tools used to level the smooth portions and finish the reliefs left more or less visible marks on most surfaces of the *cathedra*. Examining these surfaces under raking light has made it possible to identify these tools and how they were used, at least for the final stages of carving.¹⁴

14. For general contributions, see Jean-Claude Bessac, *L'outillage traditionnel du tailleur de pierre de l'Antiquité à nos jours* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1986); idem, "Problems of Identification and Interpretation of Tool Marks on Ancient Marbles and Decorative Stones," in *Classical Marble: Geochemistry, Technology, Trade*, ed. Norman Herz and Marc Waelkens, NATO ASI series, Series E, Applied Sciences 153 (Dordrecht: Springer, 1988), 41–53; Peter Rockwell, *Lavorare la pietra: manuale per l'archeologo, lo storico dell'arte e il restauratore*, trans. Alberto Bracci (Rome:

A curve-bladed chisel was used systematically to level the surfaces of the short sides of the seat, the cornices of the armrests, and the backrest, as well as the background of all the decorated areas. The tool was held at an angle of about 45 degrees, yielding a surface with regular grooves in which the angles exhibit few discrepancies. Tiny circular holes scattered over these surfaces suggest that some points had been previously roughed out using a punch held vertically. Only the widest portions of the background planes of the decorated fields were leveled further, in a rather summary manner, with a rasp.

The marks left by a chisel with a flat blade, just under 1 centimeter wide, are clearly recognizable. Usually held at an angle almost parallel to the surface, this chisel was also used at an angle of about 45 degrees to finish the smooth parts of the reliefs. In addition, it was employed to work the bands of relief-carved braid motifs, the knots, the interlaced arches, the curved surfaces on the lily leaves (creating a characteristic concave effect in the central area¹⁵), and the twisting shafts of the colonnettes. This flat-bladed chisel was used along with a pointed chisel for finishing the cuts that required greater depth in the interwoven motifs, in

the bodies of the peacocks and the *canthari*, and in some outlines, for example, the rosette petals on the backrest. On average, the reliefs stand out one centimeter from the background, while the depth of their grooves varies between 0.3 and 0.7 centimeters.

There are also signs that a strap drill was used to refine details such as the circular eyelets in the interwoven bands on the cross, so as to give a chiaroscuro effect that would have been difficult to obtain even with the punch.

The marks of the three different chisels—curve-bladed, straight, and pointed—are found identically on all parts of the *cathedra*, confirming its unitary character. The surfaces also have in common the absolute lack of a final polish, except for the sporadic use of a claw chisel: nevertheless, a certain order can be recognized in the arrangement of cuts left on the leveled surfaces by the curve-bladed chisel, which might reflect a choice or a specific aesthetic.¹⁶ There is no trace of an abrasive or pumice stone, which was widely used in classical antiquity. The only carefully smoothed surfaces are the upper and lower faces of the seat, and the rear side of the backrest; the upper face of the seat rest was clearly smoothed with use, but the other surfaces are areas of the structure that were never intended to be visible as part of the *cathedra*, and are thus likely to provide unaltered evidence of the reused slabs' original finish.

There are also no traces of the tools used for quarrying or for the first blocking out of the pieces (such as mallets, hammers, or axes); considering the quantities of ancient marbles available in Rome, this reinforces the hypothesis that the *cathedra* was made by cutting and reworking salvaged slabs, all of the same type of marble.¹⁷ It is worth noting that the dimensions of the four pieces seem to be ratios of 29.2 cm, the length identified by some scholars as the Liutprandean foot (shorter than the Roman foot of 29.57 cm), in use in *Lombardia maior* from the eighth century on.¹⁸ In this unit, the

La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1989); Coroneo, *Scultura altomedievale in Italia*, 90–91 and passim; Alessandro Ruggieri, "Strumenti e tecniche di lavorazione nella bottega dello scultore medievale," in *Medioevo: immagine e memoria*, 85–92; Lomartire, "Commacini e marmorarii," 203–6; Michelle Beghelli, "La scultura altomedievale: ateliers, artigiani itineranti e tecniche di produzione," in *L'Alto Medioevo: artigiani e organizzazione manifatturiera*, ed. Michelle Beghelli and Paola Marina De Marchi (Bologna: BraDypUS, 2014), 9–26. On sculptures from Rome, see Gianclaudio Macchiarella, ed., "Seminario sulla tecnica e il linguaggio della scultura a Roma tra VIII e IX secolo," in *Roma e l'età carolingia. Atti delle Giornate di studio, Roma, 3–8 maggio 1976*, ed. Istituto di Storia dell'arte dell'Università di Roma (Rome: Multigrafica, 1976), 267–88; idem, "Note sulla scultura in marmo a Roma tra VIII e IX secolo," in *ibid.*, 289–99; and Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidici," 415–20. Sculptures from Como: Saverio Lomartire, "Nota sulla tecnica di lavorazione dei rilievi," in *S. Abbondio, lo spazio e il tempo: tradizione storica e recupero architettonico* (Como: New Press, 1984), 232–35; Maria Letizia Casati, *Scultura medievale per l'arredo liturgico a Como* (Como: Musei Civici, 2014). On the sculptures from Bobbio, see Eleonora Destefanis, with Barbara Buttabon and Achille Bonazzi, *Materiali lapidei e fittili di età altomedievale da Bobbio* (Piacenza: Edizioni Tip. Le. Co., 2004), 58–71. On the sculptures from Novalesa, see Sofia Uggé, "I reperti scultorei altomedievali," in *Novalesa: nuove luci dall'abbazia*, ed. Maria Grazia Cerri (Milan: Electa, 2004), 59–71. On the sculptures from Trento, see Michelle Beghelli, *Scultura altomedievale dagli scavi di Santa Maria Maggiore Trento: dal reperto al contesto* (Bologna: BraDypUS, 2013), 39–50.

15. Fabio Betti, "Sculpture altomedievali dell'abbazia di Farfa," *Arte medievale* ser. 2a, 6, no. 1 (1992): 1–41, at 28–29, identifies in this detail a way of working stone that was characteristic first of Visigothic sculpture (seventh century), then Lombard (eighth century), with examples dating back to the reign of King Liutprand (712–44).

16. See Lomartire, "Nota sulla tecnica di lavorazione," 233, on the early medieval sculpture of the church of Sant'Abbondio in Como.

17. See the case of the liturgical furniture of the church of Sta. Cornelia at the Domusculpta Capracorum of Veio: Lidia Paroli, "La scultura in marmo a Roma tra l'VIII e il IX secolo," in *Roma medievale: aggiornamenti*, ed. Paolo Delogu (Florence: All'Insegna del Giglio, 1998), 93–122, at 108–9. See also Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidici," 415, and, on the vast phenomenon of the reuse of lapidary materials in early medieval Rome, Michael Greenhalgh, *The Survival of Roman Antiquities in the Middle Ages* (London: Duckworth, 1989); and Lucilla De Lachenal, *Spolia: uso e reimpiego dell'antico dal III al XIV secolo* (Milan: Longanesi, 1995), 75–90 and 97–108.

18. On the unit of the Liutprandean foot and its use in the sculpture of early medieval Italy, see Carlo Dell'Acqua, *Del Piede Liutprando detto anche Aliprando o Liprando* (Turin: Paravia, 1882); Aldo Chiavari, "Misure agrimensorie altomedievali dell'Italia cen-

seat measures $2\frac{1}{2} \times 2 \times \frac{1}{4}$ feet; the backrest $3 \times 2\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{4}$; and the armrests $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{4}$.

This type of carving, even in low relief, produces a chiaroscuro effect, visible especially where the flat chisel and the punch were used in combination, giving sufficient prominence to the designs over the surrounding ground. This effect was exploited particularly in the peacocks' bodies and the interwoven motifs, the surfaces of which are defined by masses of lines more or less deeply carved, without any hierarchical distinction between figurative and abstract motifs. Scientific examination has found no trace of paint, though this cannot entirely exclude the possibility that the *cathedra* was originally totally or partially colored: the patina that covered it before the recent restoration was the product of a prolonged exposure to the elements that may have erased all traces of pigment. Nor can we exclude the possibility of colored inserts—glass paste or stone—in the circular holes of the braided bands on the arms of the cross and along the frame of the backrest, or in the hollow square in the center of the cross itself.¹⁹

Types of Episcopal Thrones

The absence of decoration on the rear surface of the backrest and the coinciding presence of holes demonstrate that originally this *cathedra* was fixed to a wall, probably at the center of a church apse or against a presbytery wall. This detail confirms the already proposed identification of this remarkable throne as a *cathedra episcopalis*, the seat used by a bishop in presiding over the liturgy in the episcopal church itself or in a place of worship in which he usually celebrated Mass.²⁰ Indeed, the *cathedra* was one of the emblems of his office and authority. The existence of bishops' thrones in Roman settings is attested as early as the second century by a

trale: il piede di Liutprando ed il moggio nell'area marchigiana nei secoli VIII–XII,” in *Atti e Memorie della Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Marche* 86 (1981): 895–953, especially 912–16; and Lomartire, “Commacini e marmorarii,” 176.

19. There are no examples of this form surviving in Rome for the eighth and ninth centuries: see, however, Paroli, “La scultura a Roma,” 132. On the problem of the coloring of early medieval Roman sculpture, see Macchiarella, “Note sulla scultura in marmo,” 291, and Melucco Vaccaro, “Le botteghe dei lapidici,” 419–20.

20. Henri Leclercq, “Chaire épiscopale,” in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, vol. 3 (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1913), 19–75; Nikolaus Gussone, *Thron und Inthronisation des Papstes von den Anfängen bis zum 12. Jahrhundert. Zur Beziehung zwischen Herrschaftszeichen und bildhaften Begriffen, Recht und Liturgie im christlichen Verständnis von Wort und Wirklichkeit* (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1978); Gandolfo, “Cattedra,” 496–505; Jutta Dresken Weiland, “Kathedra,” in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. 20 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2003), 600–644; Giovanni Liccardo, *Architettura e liturgia nella chiesa antica* (Milan/Geneva: Skira, 2005), 154–66.

literary source, the so-called *Fragmentum Muratorianum*; later, during the reign of Constantine, the popes were endowed with the rank of *praetores*, with which came the privilege of sitting on the *sella curulis* (curule seat).²¹ Though few in number, surviving examples also help to trace the form of episcopal thrones throughout the late antique and early medieval periods.

Marble *cathedrae* with a high flat back and protruding arms are attested in the two oldest examples surviving in the Italic area: in Grado, in the basilica of Sta. Maria, and in Poreč, in the Eufasian Basilica (both dating from the first half of the sixth century; Fig. 6).²² The first is simpler, the second more elaborate, though both are free of carved decorative elements, even if the panel of *opus sectile* and mother of pearl on the Eufasian throne is taken as proof of the latter's finished state. Both are situated between the two curved wings of the clergy stalls, along the line of the apse, according to the *synthronon* model developed in the Eastern Mediterranean. The monumentalization of the *cathedra* is enhanced by a series of raised steps in front and the throne's alignment with the altar and the *ciborium*, the focal points for the gaze of the faithful gathered in the nave.²³

21. *Fragmentum Muratorianum*, 44, in Gerardus Rauschen, *Florilegium patristicum*, vol. 3. *Monumenta minora saeculi secundi* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1914), 27: *Pastorem uero nuperrime temporibus nostris in Urbe Roma Hermas conscripsit, sedente cathedra Urbis Romae ecclesiae Pio episcopo fratre eius*. The reference is to Pope Pius I (140–54): see Sible De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor: Liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale. Basilica Salvatoris, Sanctae Mariae, Sancti Petri*, vol. 1 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1994), 156. Moreover, in 318, Emperor Constantine had granted Pope Sylvester the rank and insignia reserved to *praetores*, among which were the *sella curulis* and guards with torches, as well as the titles *vir gloriosissimus* and *frater* of the sovereign: Theodor Klauser, *Der Ursprung der bischöflichen Insignien und Ehrenrechte* (Bonn: Scherpe Verlag, 1948), 13–14. For the influence of this grant on papal liturgy, see Thomas F. Mathews, “An Early Roman Chancel Arrangement and Its Liturgical Function,” *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 38 (1962): 73–95, at 80.

22. On the *cathedra* of Grado, see Amelio Tagliaferri, *Le diocesi di Aquileia e Grado. Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, vol. 10 (1981), 399–400. For the *cathedra* of Poreč, see Eugenio Russo, *Sculture del complesso eufrasiano di Parenzo* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1991), 103–5; and Ann Terry, “The Sculpture at the Cathedral of Eufasius in Poreč,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1998): 13–64, at 52–55. Though similar to the *cathedra* of the Eufasian Basilica, the one present in the center of the apse of the church of San Vitale in Ravenna is actually the outcome of a reconstruction conducted in the first decade of the twentieth century, using materials in part ancient: Clementina Rizzardi, “L'impianto liturgico nelle chiese ravennati (V–VI secolo),” *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 5 (1999): 67–85, at 73–74.

23. See Noel Duval, “Les installations liturgiques dans les églises paléochrétiennes,” *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 5 (1999): 7–28, and Liccardo, *Architettura e liturgia*, 154–66.



Figure 6. Cathedra episcopalis, first half of the sixth century, Basilica Eufresiana, Poreč, Croatia (photo: author).

Cathedrae with curved and semicircular backrests are represented by the only movable bishop's throne surviving from the sixth century: the ivory throne of Maximian of Ravenna (546–56), probably produced in Constantinople and a gift from the emperor Justinian.²⁴ The figurative decoration that covers every surface—even the panel that closes the front space below the seat—emphasizes its constituent parts. The marble bishop's throne in the cathedral of Metz, called the throne of St. Clement after the first bishop of that city,²⁵ is similar to the Ravenna throne in its overall shape but is to-

tally devoid of decoration. It was carved between the fifth and seventh centuries from the shaft of a Roman column, and its intended placement and positioning are accurately reproduced on an ivory panel still on the sumptuous binding of the Sacramentary of Drogo (second quarter of the ninth century), where it is shown isolated and elevated above steps.²⁶ The earliest example of a marble throne adorned with reliefs is still preserved in Ravenna in the church of Sant'Apollinare in Classe and dates from the time of Archbishop Damianus (668–705). The backrest is lost, but the two armrests survive, reassembled at the end of the central nave. Their external surfaces are covered by large crosses carved in very low relief, while fish and rosettes decorate the surrounding spaces.²⁷

The *cathedrae* of Grado, Poreč, Ravenna, and Metz have their models in the Graeco-Roman world, especially in the thrones of mythological characters, Hellenistic kings, preachers, philosophers, and imperial magistrates; their typologies are known through preserved examples or contemporary depictions.²⁸

By contrast, for the period from the fourth century to the Carolingian age, no papal *cathedra* from Rome has survived in situ; although similar to the cited examples, the throne in the lower church of SS. Martina e Luca in the Forum was recognized as a *pastiche* created in the late Middle Ages, using four columnar pillars from an early seventh-century presbytery screen.²⁹ However, early medieval liturgical sources and scattered archaeological data do provide some information, as in the case of the three major Roman basilicas where the papal liturgy took place. The Lateran Cathedral must have had a *cathedra* set at the center of the apse from the beginning, while St. Peter's in the Vatican had received at least one from the time of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604), as did Sta. Maria Maggiore from the time of Paschal I (817–24).³⁰ Furthermore, in the eighth century these *cathedrae*

26. Carol Heitz, *L'architecture religieuse carolingienne: les formes et leurs fonctions* (Paris: Picard, 1980), 204.

27. Patrizia Angiolini Martinelli, *Altari, amboni, cibori, cornici, plutei con figure di animali e con intrecci, transenne e frammenti vari. Corpus della scultura paleocristiana, bizantina e altomedievale di Ravenna*, vol. 1 (Rome: De Luca, 1968), 83 (no. 143).

28. Francesco Canciani, "Trono," in *Enciclopedia dell'arte antica classica e orientale*, vol. 7 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1966), 1011–18; Guglielmo Matthiae, "Cattedra," in *Enciclopedia dell'arte antica classica e orientale*, vol. 2 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1959), 435–36.

29. See Paroli, "La scultura a Roma," 134.

30. De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 66–72, 77, 81, 117–27, 377–94, and 470–87; idem, "Die vier Hauptkirche Roms," in 799. *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit. Karl der Grosse und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn. Beiträge*, ed. Christoph Stiegmann and Matthias Wemhoff (Mainz: Zabern, 1999), 529–41; idem, "L'altare nelle

24. Ravenna, Museo Arcivescovile, inv. no. 98. For a summary on the *cathedra* of Maximian, see Raffaella Farioli Campanati, "La cattedra d'avorio," in *Konstantinopel: scultura bizantina dai musei di Berlino. Catalogo della mostra* (Rome: De Luca, 2000), 93–97.

25. Carol Heitz, "Metz. Groupe cathédral. Cathédrale Saint-Étienne, église Saint-Pierre, église Sainte-Marie," in *Les premiers monuments chrétiens de la France*, vol. 3: Ovest, Nord et Est (Paris: Picard, 1998), 260–63, at 261.

were elevated above the level of the surrounding stalls for the clergy, set up on a dais ample enough to allow some deacons or presbyters to stand beside the seated pope.³¹ Such is the placement shown in the Drogo ivory plaque, for example, a faithful image of the presbytery of the cathedral of Metz laid out by Bishop Chrodegang (742–66) on the model of eighth-century Roman churches.³²

The aforementioned *cathedra* in the Crypta Balbi Museum in Rome (Fig. 7) dates to the closing decades of the eighth century. Its find spot links it (along with other carved items) to the church of Sant'Adriano in Foro, the ancient Curia Senatus, consecrated in 630 by Pope Honorius I (625–38) and restored by Hadrian I, the period in which this liturgical furniture originated.³³ Only two fragments of the lateral supports of the *cathedra* survive. These continued upward without a break, to form the armrests: at about two-thirds of the total height, a horizontal groove allowed for the insertion of the seat (now lost), while one or more protruding pins on the rear sides fitted into the vertical slab that served as a backrest (also lost). On the outside, these supports are decorated with geometric and floral compositions, carved into a single field to form a motif identified as the Tree of Life; on the inner surfaces, below the seat, two rectangular fields contain motifs of intertwining triple-grooved bands. The fragmentary state of the remains makes it impossible to determine whether the inner faces of the arms above the seat were carved, but the decorations on the outside mean that the throne was not inserted between the stalls of a *synthronon* (as in the cases of the Grado and Poreč *cathedrae* described above), but must have been freestanding at the sides, in accord with the sources cited.



Figure 7. Cathedra episcopalis [restored] from Sant'Adriano in Foro, late eighth century, Crypta Balbi Museum, Rome (photo: author).

The two fragments in the Crypta Balbi installation were put together on the model of the *cathedra* discussed here (an image of which appears in the adjacent information panel), being similar in both the structure and the layout of their decorated surfaces (despite some differences). A further reconstructed detail on the Sant'Adriano throne is the triangular pediment of its backrest, something that considerably enhances the monumental aspect of this reintegrated *cathedra*; whether this is an accurate reconstruction cannot be determined.

Indeed, not one of the bishop's thrones so far described has a backrest shaped like the one under discussion. The oldest similar example is a movable wooden *cathedra* decorated with bone plaques, the fragments of which were discovered in Rome close to the present Via delle Botteghe Oscure, in the area of the ancient monastery of San Lorenzo in Pallacinis (Fig. 8).³⁴ From these remains, it has been possible to reconstruct a *cathedra* with a seat mounted on panels pierced

chiese di Roma come centro di culto e della committenza papale," in *Roma nell'Alto Medioevo*, 2:969–89. On Sta. Maria Maggiore, see also Francesco Gandolfo, "La cattedra di Pasquale I in S. Maria Maggiore," in *Roma e l'età carolingia*, 55–67.

31. De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 81.

32. Carol Heitz, "Le groupe cathédral de Metz au temps de saint Chrodegang," in *Saint Chrodegang: communications présentées au colloque tenu à Metz à l'occasion du XIIe centenaire de sa mort* (Metz: Éditions le Lorrain, 1967), 123–32; idem, *L'architecture religieuse carolingienne*, 204; Paolo Piva, "Metz, un gruppo episcopale alla svolta dei tempi (secoli IV–IX)," *Antiquité Tardive* 8 (2000): 252–60.

33. Paroli, "Cattedra," 489–91. On the other furniture from Sant'Adriano, see Kautzsch, "Die römische Schmuckkunst," 45; the entry by Lidia Paroli, "Lastra di recinzione," in *Roma dall'Antichità al Medioevo*, 491–92; and Antonella Ballardini, "Sculptura a Roma: standards qualitativi e committenza (VIII secolo)," in *L'VIII secolo: un secolo inquieto. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Civildale del Friuli, 4–7 dicembre 2008*, ed. Valentino Pace (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 2010), 141–48, at 141–42. On the transformation of the Curia Senatus into a church and its early medieval history, see Giulia Borda, "Sant'Adriano al Foro e gli affreschi altomedievali," in *Roma dall'Antichità al Medioevo*, 478–80.

34. Marco Ricci, "Cattedra lignea della Crypta Balbi," in *Roma dall'Antichità al Medioevo*, 494–97. On the early medieval phases of the monastery of San Lorenzo in Pallacinis, see Lucia Sagui, "Roma, i centri privilegiati e la lunga durata della tarda Antichità. Dati



Figure 8. Cathedra episcopalis [restored] from San Lorenzo in Pallacinis, late eighth century, Crypta Balbi Museum, Rome (photo: author).

with arches and colonnettes, with sloping arms, and a high triangular backrest. Analysis of its decorative motifs and find spot suggests a date within the closing decades of the eighth century, when the monastery was restored at the behest of Hadrian I. It cannot be excluded that this movable *cathedra episcopalis*, made by Roman craftsmen, was a gift to the monastery church from the pope himself. Directly comparable is the so-called *cathedra* of St. Peter, the wood and ivory throne that the Frankish king Charles the Bald (840–77) used for his imperial coronation, which took place in Rome in 875 (Fig. 9).³⁵ It was then donated by the king to the Vatican Basilica as a sign of devotion to the apostle, a gesture probably meant to emulate the alleged gift of the imperial regalia to Pope Sylvester by Constantine, as narrated in the apocryphal

archeologici dal deposito di VII secolo nell'esedra della Crypta Balbi," *Archeologia Medievale* 29 (2002): 21–29.

35. See the essays collected in *La cathedra lignea di S. Pietro in Vaticano. Atti della Pontificia Accademia romana di archeologia. Memorie X* (Rome: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1971); Margherita Guarducci, *La cathedra di San Pietro nella scienza e nella fede* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1982); Michele Maccarrone, "La 'cathedra Sancti Petri' nel Medioevo. Da simbolo a reliquia," *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 39 (1985): 349–447, with a critical reevaluation of previous research.



Figure 9. "Cathedra of St. Peter," ca. 875, wood and ivory, St. Peter's, Vatican City (photo: Norwegian Institute in Rome, University of Oslo, inv. no. C_3_017_1975_3).

Actus Silvestri and the forged *Constitutum Constantini* (Donation of Constantine).³⁶

The papal and imperial thrones of San Lorenzo in Pallacinis and St. Peter's demonstrate that, in the late eighth and ninth centuries, backrests incorporating triangular pediments were associated with the highest ranks of the Roman

36. Thus Gandolfo, "Cattedra," 498. On the *Actus Silvestri*, the overall redaction of which is dated to between the end of the fourth and the end of the fifth century, see Francesco Scorza Barcellona, "Silvestro I," in *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, vol. 1 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2000), 321–33, and Tessa Canella, *Gli Actus Silvestri. Genesi di una leggenda su Costantino imperatore* (Spoleto: CISAM, 2006). On the *Constitutum Constantini*, which most scholars date between the mid-eighth century and the beginning of the ninth century, see Gian Maria Vian, *La donazione di Costantino* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004), especially 53–89, where the various opinions expressed in the literature are summarized and discussed. On the influence of these texts on art, see Alberto Cadili, "Costantino e l'autorappresentazione del papato. Arte, architettura e cerimoniali romani," in *Costantino I. Enciclopedia costantiniana sulla figura e l'immagine dell'imperatore del cosiddetto Editto di Milano*, 313–2013, vol. 2 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2013), 713–35.

Church and the Carolingian Empire. Indirect confirmation of this can be deduced from its frequent repetition during the central Middle Ages in the richest ecclesiastical and secular monuments.³⁷ Since there are no known precise antecedents for this type of backrest dating to early Christian antiquity, the triangular pediment of the backrest would seem to be an eighth-century innovation. A generic comparison exists in the so-called throne of Dagobert, dated (not without question) between the seventh and the eighth century, although the backrest is definitely a Carolingian addition to the original structure.³⁸ However, a significant (albeit tiny) precedent can be seen in a chalcedony gem of the imperial period, documented in Florence in the eighteenth century and now preserved in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin (Fig. 10).³⁹ It bears a depiction of an empty throne with a tall tympanum-topped backrest and turned side supports, on which lies a wreath containing a six-pointed star, the attribute of an unnamed pagan god. In the Byzantine period this throne was attributed to Christ by adding the Greek inscription “Ι(ησοῦς) Χ(ριστὸς) Ὑ(ιὸς) Θ(εοῦ)” on the backrest. The fashioning of two monograms also added on that occasion at the sides—and containing the owner’s name *Paulos*—dates this reworking to circa 600.

This gem demonstrates not only that thrones with tympanum-topped backrests were known in the Roman and Byzantine worlds, but it also shows their high sacral value. Originally, according to a Hellenistic iconography echoed in the Roman period, empty thrones were symbols of pagan gods, but once Christianized, the image was used to represent the Last Judgment seat on which the Messiah will sit at his Second Coming, the “throne of glory” specifically named in Matthew 25:31, which inspired the iconography known in Greek as the *etoimasia*.⁴⁰ Another significant object inspired by the *etoimasia*



Figure 10. Gemstone with carved cathedra and a later Greek inscription (read from right to left) attributing the throne to Christ, original gemstone imperial Roman, reworked ca. 600, chalcedony, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, inv. no. I 4936 (photo: A. Voigt; © SMB–Museum für Byzantinische Kunst). See the electronic edition of *Gesta* for a color version of this image.

throne is the so-called *cathedra* of St. Mark once in the cathedral of Grado (now in St. Mark’s Basilica, Venice), which is actually an alabaster reliquary of Egyptian or Middle Eastern origin, dated circa 600, and thus coeval with the reworking of the Berlin gem.⁴¹ Its backrest also terminates in a tympanum, decorated with a central disc ornamented with a cross flanked by two saints, while the Lamb and the Tree of Life are depicted in the space below. It is in this type of Roman and Byzantine pedimented *cathedrae* that the model for the episcopal and regal thrones made in eighth-century Rome

37. See Gandolfo, “Cattedra” and “Trono,” in *Enciclopedia dell’arte medioevale*, vol. 11 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2000), 498–505 and 362–66, respectively. A significant example is offered by the triangular *cathedra* backrest discovered at the abbey of Farfa, formerly dated to the ninth century and now correctly assigned to the twelfth: Charles McClendon, “Liturgical Furniture at Farfa Abbey and Its Roman Sources in the Early and High Middle Ages,” in *Arredi di culto e disposizioni liturgiche a Roma da Costantino a Sisto IV. Atti del Colloquio internazionale, Roma, 3–4 dicembre 1999*, ed. Sible de Blaauw (Assen/Rome: Van Gorcum, 2001), 198–205.

38. For the latest update on the throne, see Mathilde Avisseau-Brustet, “Trône de Dagobert,” in *Les temps mérovingiens: trois siècles d’art et de culture (451–751). Catalogue de l’exposition* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2016), 60.

39. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. I 4936. See Jeffrey Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*, 2nd rev. ed. (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2013), 76–77.

40. On the iconography of the empty throne in the Graeco-Roman world, see Eugenio La Rocca, “I troni dei nuovi dei,” in

Culto imperial: politica y poder, ed. Trinidad Nogales and Julián Gonzáles (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 2007), 75–104. On the Christian image, see Umberto Utro, “Etimasia,” in *Temi di iconografia paleocristiana*, ed. Fabrizio Bisconti (Vatican City: Scuola Tipografica San Pio X, 2000), 173–74. On the sacral value of the throne in the late Roman and early Christian world, as attribute of a deity, see Thomas F. Mathews, *Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*, rev. and expanded ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 103–14. On the political use of the iconography of the *etoimasia* in the Byzantine world, see Matteo Bezzi, *Iconologia della sacralità del potere: il tondo Angaran e l’etimasia* (Spoleto: CISAM, 2007).

41. Venice, Basilica of St. Mark, treasury, inv. no. 8. See Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, “Trono-reliquiario detto Sedia di San Marco,” in *Il tesoro di San Marco. Catalogo dell’esposizione* (Milan: Olivetti, 1986), 106–13.

and in the Carolingian Empire must be sought. The choice of this form must have been freighted with meaning, given its ancient sacral value.

Decorative Apparatus

The decorative apparatus of the newly resurfaced *cathedra* under discussion centers on various elements with strong symbolic value placed intentionally at the most visible points: the cross in the middle of the backrest; the peacocks drinking from *canthari* on the exterior panels of the armrests; and the two palm trees on the front of the armrests. Equally rich in meaning, though confined to a smaller space, is the bunch of grapes on the backrest, juxtaposed with a Solomon's knot on the other side of the cross arm. According to a widespread code of imagery shared in Christianity from Late Antiquity onward, eucharistic and paradisiacal themes constitute the dominant thread, through motifs that recall the Last Supper (the bunch of grapes, the chalice in the form of a *cantharus*), the death and resurrection of Christ (the cross), and the *locus paradisiacus* (the drinking peacocks and the palm fronds).⁴² To the figurative element is added a repertoire of abstract, or strongly geometrized, motifs, well integrated into the overall aesthetic language of the slabs: with a more or less strict sense of symmetry, frames and clear spaces are covered with motifs based on the interweave of triple bands (braids, arches), as well as floral elements (rosettes of various types, lilies) and fronds (the symmetrical double palm leaves with a flower issuing from their center).

Crosses, peacocks drinking from *canthari* (or flanking the cross in an attitude of *adoratio*), bunches of grapes, and palms are the most frequently occurring figurative motifs on the liturgical furniture of the Roman basilicas during the eighth and ninth centuries. They are also found on relief-carved *transennae* at St. Peter's Basilica (dating from the papacy of Gregory III, 731–41; Figs. 11–12a–b; and Leo III, 795–816); Sta. Maria in Cosmedin (Fig. 13) and Sta. Maria in Trastevere (Hadrian I; Fig. 14), Sta. Sabina (Eugene II, 824–27), San Saba (mid-ninth century), the Lateran Basilica and San Basilio in the Forum of Augustus (second half of the ninth century);⁴³ on the *ciborium* arches of St. Peter's in

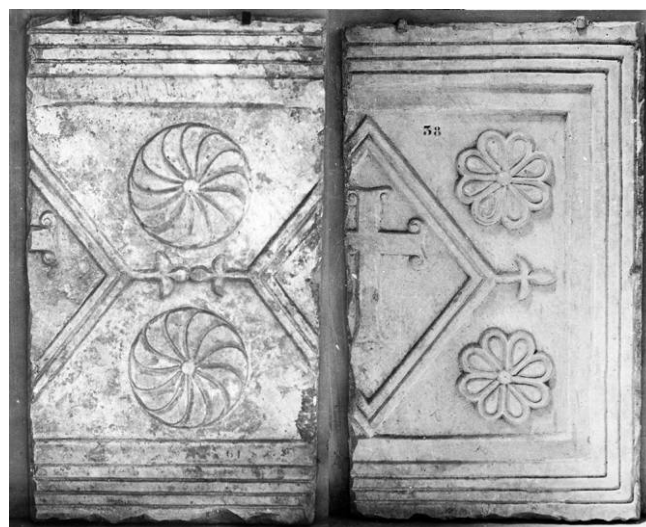


Figure 11. Two fragments of a transenna, St. Peter's, Vatican City (photo: Norwegian Institute in Rome, University of Oslo, inv. no. C_3_237_480 and C_3_217_464).

the Vatican (then removed to Sta. Maria Maggiore ca. 775; Fig. 15a–b), of Sta. Maria ad Martyres and San Sebastiano on the Via Appia (second half of the eighth century), of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara, Sant'Ermite on the Via Salaria, and Sta. Cornelia at the Domusculia Capracorum of Veio (Hadrian I); of San Valentino on the Via Flaminia, Sto. Stefano Rotondo (late eighth–early ninth century), and the Lateran Basilica (Leo IV, 847–55);⁴⁴ finally, on the *antependium*

e Flechtwerk," in *Medioevo: arte e storia. Atti del X Convegno internazionale di studi, Parma, 18–22 settembre 2007*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle (Milan/Parma: Electa, 2008), 225–46, at 231–37 (with positions partly diverging from those held by Russo). Sta. Maria in Cosmedin: Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 3: *La II regione ecclesiastica. Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, vol. 7 (1974), 148–51 (nos. 103–4); Macchiarella, "Note sulla scultura in marmo," 293–95. Sta. Maria in Trastevere: Kautzsch, "Die römische Schmuckkunst," 39; Macchiarella, "Seminario," 270–71. Sta. Sabina: Margherita Trinci Cecchelli, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 4: *La I regione ecclesiastica. Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, vol. 7 (1976), 201–7 (nos. 235–38). San Saba: *ibid.*, 116–22 (nos. 79–83). Lateran Basilica: Melucco Vaccaro, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 3, 117–18 (no. 63). San Basilio in the Forum of Augustus: Letizia Pani Ermini, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 2: *La raccolta dei Fori imperiali. Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, vol. 7 (1974), 59–62 (nos. 42, 43, and 45).

44. *Ciborium* of St. Peter's in the Vatican, then moved to Sta. Maria Maggiore: Letizia Pani Ermini, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 1: *La IV regione ecclesiastica. Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, vol. 7 (1974), 107–9 (nos. 47–50); Macchiarella, "Seminario," 270. Sta. Maria ad Martyres: Pani Ermini, "Note sulla decorazione dei cibori," 118–19. San Sebastiano sull'Appia: *ibid.*, 117–18. Sant'Andrea Catabarbara: Pani Ermini, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 1, 65–66 (nos. 10–11). Sant'Ermite on the Via Salaria: Umberto Broccoli, *La diocesi di Roma*,

42. See Pani Ermini, "Note sulla decorazione dei cibori," 116–17; Eugenio Russo, "Fasi e nodi della scultura a Roma nel VI e VII secolo," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome-Moyen Âge, Temps Modernes* 96, no. 1 (1984): 7–48; Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidici," 404–5.

43. St. Peter's in Vatican: Eugenio Russo, "La recinzione del presbiterio di S. Pietro in Vaticano dal VI all'VIII secolo," *Atti della Pontificia Accademia romana di archeologia-Rendiconti* ser. 3a, 55–56 (1982–84): 3–33, at 12–33; Antonella Ballardini, "Scultura per l'arredo liturgico nella Roma di Pasquale I: tra modelli paleocristiani



Figure 12a–b. Two fragments of a transenna carved with palm trees, each interpreted as the Tree of Life, St. Peter's, Vatican City (photo: Norwegian Institute in Rome, University of Oslo, inv. no. C_3_227_467 and C_3_226_466).

(hanging for the altar front) of the altar of SS. Quattro Coronati (Leo IV), on the two *antependia* now in the House of the Knights of Rhodes (second half of the ninth century), and on that of Sta. Maria in Aracoeli (late ninth–early tenth century).⁴⁵

As can be deduced even from this partial list, the figurative themes depicted on the present *cathedra* were recurrent in Rome on the furniture that completed the space of the church for the celebration of the eucharistic rite. Patrons

and craftsmen could find models in the early Christian and early medieval monuments that survived in the city, some directly present on the prestigious *transennae* donated to the Vatican Basilica by Gregory the Great (590–604) at the end of the sixth century and renovated in the first half of the eighth by Gregory III (731–41). In these two series there were already the cross with curlicues at the corners (Fig. 11), an Italic variation of the Constantinian “cross of light” with eight whorls at the corners of the arms, attested from the sixth century;⁴⁶ the peacocks drinking from a *cantharus*, an ancient funerary image of *refrigerium* (commemorative meal for the dead) that under the pontificate of Gregory the Great

vol. 5: *Il suburbio*, 1. *Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, vol. 7 (1981), 98–100 (no. 24). Sta. Cornelia: Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro and Lidia Paroli, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 6: *Il Museo dell'Alto Medioevo. Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, vol. 7 (1995), 280–82 (no. 216). San Basilio in the Forum of Augustus: Pani Ermini, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 2, 62–64 (nos. 46–47). San Valentino on the Flaminia: Broccoli, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 5, 76–79 (nos. 3–4). Sto. Stefano Rotondo: Melucco Vaccaro, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 3, 221 (no. 214). Lateran Basilica: *ibid.*, 107–9 (no. 41).

45. SS. Quattro Coronati: Melucco Vaccaro, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 3, 187–90 (nos. 154–55). House of the Knights of Rhodes: Pani Ermini, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 2, 59–60 (nos. 42–43). Sta. Maria in Aracoeli: Melucco Vaccaro and Paroli, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 6, 120–24 (no. 28).

46. On the typology of the cross, see Letizia Pani Ermini, “Il sarcofago di S. Maria di Siponto,” *Vetera Christianorum* 11, no. 2 (1974): 368–75; Eugenio Russo, “Studi sulla scultura paleocristiana e altomedievale. Il sarcofago dell'arcivescovo Grazioso in S. Apollinare in Classe,” *Studi Medievali* ser. 3a, 15 (1974): 38–73. A precocious example on a piece of liturgical furniture is offered by a *transenna* from Aversa, now in the Bode Museum in Berlin (inv. no. 3021), datable within the sixth century and perhaps originating in Ravenna: see the entry by Arne Effenberger, “Frammento di pannello votivo,” in *Konstantinopel: scultura bizantina*, 78–79.



Figure 13. Two peacocks on a single cross, each drinking from a cantharus, carved on the transenna, papacy of Hadrian I (772–95), Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, Rome (photo: author).

must have been reinterpreted as part of a eucharistic code;⁴⁷ and palms readable as the Tree of Life (Fig. 12a–b), a symbol probably inspired by images of biblical texts such as Genesis 2:9 and Revelation 2:7 and 22:2.⁴⁸ Even the colonnettes with twisted shafts and simplified capitals were already present on the Vatican slabs of Gregory III, as supports for architectural aedicules that divide up the decorated areas, derived from the fronts of the columnar sarcophagi from the third and fourth centuries.⁴⁹ Finally, the vines, with their

shoots and clusters, had been a recurring theme in the decoration of sixth- and seventh-century presbytery screens. The colonnettes from the time of Honorius I, later reused in the aforementioned *cathedra* of the church of SS. Martina e Luca, are one example.⁵⁰

If, in short, this is the iconographic context—unequivocally Roman in character—in which the present *cathedra* is to be viewed, some details are nevertheless very peculiar. On the right armrest, the peacocks support the *cantharus* with a single leg each, while on the left, the bodies of the two birds end with an upward curl above the tail; on the latter slab, the right-hand peacock has a Greek cross on its head, instead of the expected crest. Identical details accompanied by equally identical lily and rosette motifs can also be found on a *transenna* in Sta. Maria in Cosmedin (Figs. 4, 5, 13). This is the single most compelling match for our *cathedra*, since no other known reliefs surviving from eighth- or ninth-century Rome incorporate details like these. But the similarities do not stop there: both the symmetrical double palm design with a vertical flower issuing from its center beneath the peacocks on the left-hand armrest and the frame along the lower edge of the right armrest covered with interwoven triple-banded arches are almost identical in form to the same details on the relief at Sta. Maria in Cosme-

47. See Pani Ermini, “Note sulla decorazione dei cibori,” 117 and 122. For the fragmentary *transenna* of the Vatican Basilica, see Russo, “Fasi e nodi della scultura,” 32–34 and fig. 18. Contemporary examples are to be found in the upper Adriatic area, for example, in the basilica of Sta. Eufemia in Grado: see Tagliaferri, *Le diocesi di Aquileia e Grado*, 346 (no. 520); perhaps the models imitated at the time of Pope Gregory the Great reached Rome precisely from the upper Adriatic area.

48. See Henri Leclercq, “Palme, palmier,” in *Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, vol. 13 (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1937), 947–61; Betti, “Sculpture altomedievale,” 23–25; Antonio Iacobini, “L’albero della vita nell’immaginario medievale: Bisanzio e l’Occidente,” in *L’architettura medievale in Sicilia: la cattedrale di Palermo*, ed. Angiola Maria Romanini and Antonio Cadei (Rome: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana, 1994), 241–90; Paola De Santis, “Palma,” in Bisconti, *Temi di iconografia*, 238–40.

49. For the examples from the presbytery of the ancient Vatican Basilica, see Russo, “La recinzione del presbiterio,” 12–33, and Ballardini, “Sculptura per l’arredo liturgico,” 231–37.

50. See Russo, “Fasi e nodi della scultura,” 42–45; Paroli, “La scultura a Roma,” 133–34.



Figure 14. Two peacocks on separate crosses, drinking from a single cantharus, carved on the transenna, papacy of Hadrian I (772–95), Sta. Maria in Trastevere, Rome (photo: author).

din. Less detailed, but still significant, similarities can also be observed on one of the *ciborium* arches at Sant'Andrea Catabarbara, where the peacocks' feathers are rendered by extremely anti-naturalistic rows of circles, as on the *transenna* of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin and on the left armrest of our *cathedra* (Figs. 5, 13).⁵¹

As for the abstract motifs and phytomorphic fill-ins, rosettes and stylized lilies make their first extensive appearance in Roman sculpture on *transennae* commissioned by Pope Gregory III for the Vatican Basilica (Fig. 11).⁵² These carvings are of crucial importance for early medieval Roman sculpture, given that they show a definitive departure from the sixth-century Byzantine models (represented, for example, in the exceptional complex of liturgical furniture preserved in San Clemente, still imitated in St. Peter's at the time of Pope Gregory the Great) and an openness toward artistic influences from the neighboring Lombard regions, from which also came a *horror vacui* hitherto unknown in Rome.⁵³ Although organized in rigidly structured patterns,

including the use of architectural partitions, the surfaces of the *transennae* of Gregory III are full of geometric floral motifs, products of a fresh sensibility, while the inclusion of abstract decorative motifs within the frames changes the appearance significantly (Fig. 12a–b).⁵⁴ Under the successors of Gregory III, the abstract repertoire was enriched with motifs of interwoven bands and arches set in a row. In this regard, the fragmentary arches of the *ciborium* of St. Peter, then transferred to Sta. Maria Maggiore, are a further turning point in the artistic tradition of early medieval Rome (Fig. 15a–b).⁵⁵ Braids, interwoven bands, and arches in rows all appear in Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, not only on the peacock relief but also on the colonnettes and architraves that composed the *pergula* framing the presbyteral area at the entrance to the presbytery (Figs. 16–17).⁵⁶ One comes across them side by side with figurative elements on furniture that scholars have attributed to the same final decades of the eighth century: a *transenna* with peacocks from Sta. Maria in Trastevere

51. See the comparisons proposed by Pani Ermini, "Note sulla decorazione dei cibori," 120–21, and by Paroli, "La scultura a Roma," 138–39.

52. See Russo, "La recinzione del presbiterio," 12–33; Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidici," 399–400; Ballardini, "Scultura per l'arredo liturgico," 231–37 (with alternative suggestions for the dating of these carvings).

53. On this subject, see Pani Ermini, "Note sulla decorazione dei cibori," 117; Paroli, "La scultura in marmo," 95–96; Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidici," 399–401; Paroli, "La scultura a Roma," 135–37. In general, see Silvana Casartelli Novelli, "Horror vacui versus amor infiniti: la lezione della scultura altomedievale a quarant'anni dal Corpus della Diocesi di Spoleto," in *Umbria cristiana: dalla diffusione del culto al culto dei santi (secc. IV–X)*.

Atti del XV Congresso internazionale di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, Spoleto, 23–28 ottobre 2000 (Spoleto: CISAM, 2001), 749–86.

54. See in particular Paroli, "La scultura a Roma," 134–35, and Ballardini, "Scultura a Roma," 145.

55. On the importance of these fragments in the development of eighth-century Roman sculpture, see Betti, "Sculture altomedievali," 26–27, which, as opposed to the contributions cited in note 44, puts back the dating to the mid-eighth century.

56. Melucco Vaccaro, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 3, 152–53 (no. 106); Macchiarella, "Seminario," 268–71; idem, "Note sulla scultura in marmo," 293–97 (with dates—accepted here—somewhat different from those of Melucco Vaccaro); Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidici," 402–3; Paroli, "La scultura a Roma," 138–39; Ballardini, "Scultura a Roma," 142–43.



Figure 15a–b. Fragments of arches from four sides of a ciborium from St. Peter's, moved ca. 775 to Sta. Maria Maggiore, Rome, and now in the loggia of the basilica (photo: author).

(Fig. 14), the slabs of the *ciboria* of Sta. Maria ad Martyres and of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara already mentioned, as well as various fragments found in the Temple of Portunus (or of Fortuna Virilis) in the Forum Boarium, transformed in the Middle Ages into the church of Sta. Maria de Secundicerio.⁵⁷

Among the decorative motifs of the *cathedra* under discussion here, three are entirely absent from the earlier Roman repertoire of sculptured liturgical furniture: the band with entwined arches; the palm (or Tree of Life) with pointed leaves and curling corollas; and the double palm leaves with vertical flower at the center. If the bands of interlaced arches first appear on a relief fragment from Ravenna (dated ca. 700), the most widespread dissemination of such bands was in the Po Valley during the eighth century and the first decades of the ninth. They are found used as decoration on *transennae*, ambons, or cornices of *pergulae* in Ventimiglia (cathedral), Milan (Sta. Maria di Aurora), Como (Sant'Abbondio), Cremona (crypt of the church of San Michele), Brescia (church of San Salvatore), Trento (Sta. Maria Maggiore), and Vicenza (SS. Felice e Fortunato; cathedral).⁵⁸ On these furnishings, triple-banded arches alternate

with pearly bands, while in some cases the free spaces are also filled with stylized leaves. This motif is markedly characteristic of the sculpture of the Lombard kingdom, even in its variety.⁵⁹ A very early example of the pearly-band type in the Lazio area—an architrave fragment—was discovered at Otricoli (Assunta Cathedral) and dated to the late eighth century.⁶⁰ Even the slender vertical palm tree motifs carved on the armrests of our *cathedra* occur on several relief sculptures surviving in northern Italy that are datable to the eighth century, for example, in Albenga (baptistery; Fig. 18), Como (Sant'Abbondio), Brescia (cathedral; church of San Salvatore), Vicenza (SS. Felice e Fortunato), and Cividale del Friuli (the Sigualdo slab later reused in the *tegurium* [roof over an

57. Melucco Vaccaro, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 3, 223–43; Macchiarella, "Seminario," 269–71; idem, "Note sulla scultura in marmo," 297; Paroli, "La scultura a Roma," 139.

58. Ravenna, Museo Nazionale, inv. no. 748: Angiolini Martinelli, *Altari, amboni, cibori*, 63 (no. 98). Ventimiglia, cathedral: Verzone, *L'arte preromanica in Liguria*, 112 (no. 108: eighth century). Milan, Sta. Maria di Aurora: Paola Dianzani, *Sta. Maria d'Aurora a Milano: fase altomedievale* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1989), 31 (mid-eighth century). Como, Sant'Abbondio: Roberto Cassanelli, "I ma-

teriali lapidei decorati di età carolingia. Rapporto preliminare," in S. Abbondio, *lo spazio e il tempo*, 219 (no. 16: ninth century); Casati, *Scultura medievale*, 114 (no. 24: ninth century). Cremona, crypt of San Michele: Ardea Ebani, "I capitelli della cripta di San Michele a Cremona," *Commentari* n.s. 22, no. 1 (1971): 3–12 (seventh–eighth century). Brescia, San Salvatore: Gaetano Panazza and Amelio Tagliaferri, *La diocesi di Brescia. Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, vol. 3 (1966), 73–76 (nos. 63–79: second half of eighth–early ninth century). Trento, Sta. Maria Maggiore: Beghelli, *Scultura altomedievale*, 176–79 (types C38, C39, C40; eighth–ninth century). Vicenza, SS. Felice e Fortunato: Ettore Napione, *La diocesi di Vicenza. Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, vol. 14 (2001), 199–200 (nos. 92–93: early ninth century?); cathedral: *ibid.*: 222–27 (no. 116: ninth century?).

59. Verzone, *L'arte preromanica in Liguria*, 172–75; Macchiarella, "Note sulla scultura in marmo," 296; Beghelli, *Scultura altomedievale*, 176–79.

60. Gioia Bertelli, *Le diocesi di Amelia, Narni e Otricoli. Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, vol. 12 (1985), 260 (no. 185).



Figure 16. Fragment of an architrave with arches, inscription with the name of Pope Hadrian, and rosettes, from the pergula, Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, Rome, late eighth century (photo: Norwegian Institute in Rome, University of Oslo, inv. no. C_3_116_154).

altar] of the Callisto baptistery).⁶¹ Once again, its unique styling makes this a motif typical of the lands in central Italy that were subject to the Lombards: the first known examples in central Italy date from about the middle of the eighth century, and are located on two pillars in Osimo and Monteleone in the Sabina, while the motif recurs in the second half of the century on an altar now housed in Narni (from San Martino in Taizzano).⁶²

The carvings listed above can be attributed to various workshops, all of them, however, active in *Langobardia maior* or the duchy of Spoleto; ongoing studies are clarifying the chronology and area of activity of these workshops with increasing precision.⁶³ Among these skilled craftsmen active across northern and central Italy in the eighth century, a rep-

61. Albenga, baptistery: Verzone, *L'arte preromanica in Liguria*, 23 (no. 15: eighth century). Como, Sant'Abbondio: Cassanelli, "I materiali lapidei," 224 (no. 67: early decades of the eighth century); Casati, *Scultura medievale*, 93 (no. 5: 710–30). Brescia, cathedral: Panazza and Tagliaferri, *La diocesi di Brescia*, 41–42 (no. 25: eighth–ninth century); church of San Salvatore: *ibid.*, 88–89 (no. 96: ninth century). Vicenza, SS. Felice e Fortunato: Napione, *La diocesi di Vicenza*, 194–95 (no. 81: early ninth century?). Cividale del Friuli, *Sigualdo* slab: Tagliaferri, *Le diocesi di Aquileia e Grado*, 216–19 (no. 331: 756–86).

62. Fragments from Osimo and Monteleone: Fabio Betti, "Lapicidi longobardi tra Pentapoli, Piceno, Sabina e Roma. Un aggiornamento critico sulla scultura di VIII secolo nel ducato di Spoleto," *Arte Medievale* 6, no. 1 (2007): 47–63, at 48–50 and figs. 7–8 (late eighth century). Altar of San Martino in Taiazzano: Bertelli, *Le diocesi di Amelia, Narni e Otricoli*, 193–98 (no. 103: late eighth century).

63. On the artistic relations between Rome and the Lombard territories during the eighth century, with special reference to sculpture, see Pani Ermini, "Note sulla decorazione dei cibori," 116–20; Giulio Ciampoltrini, "Pulchris ecce micat nitentes marmoris decus. Appunti sulla scultura d'età longobarda nella Toscana meridionale," *Prospettiva* 64 (1991): 43–48; Silvia Lusuardi Siena, "L'arredo liturgico



Figure 17. Colonnette and architrave of the pergula with decorative interlacing bands, late eighth century, Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, Rome (photo: Norwegian Institute in Rome, University of Oslo, inv. no. C_3_095_451).

ertoire of substantially homogeneous decorative motifs, consistent in layout, seems to have spread freely. Drawn partly from Classical, early Christian, and Byzantine models and partly from goldsmiths' work of the sixth and seventh centuries, it was passed from generation to generation and across several workshops.⁶⁴ It is curious that this repertoire seems to have lacked the motif of symmetrical palmettes with central stems traceable in ancestral Byzantine ornament. This

altomedievale," in *San Martino a Rive d'Arcano. Archeologia e storia di una pieve friulana*, ed. Silvia Lusuardi Siena (Udine: Campanotto, 1997), 145–98; Paroli, "La scultura in marmo," 96–100; Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapicidi," 401–2; Paroli, "La scultura a Roma," 137–38; Betti, "Lapicidi longobardi," 47–63.

64. See Geza De Francovich, "Il problema delle origini della scultura cosiddetta 'longobarda,'" in *Atti del I Congresso internazionale di studi longobardi, Spoleto, 27–30 settembre 1951* (Spoleto: CISAM, 1952), 255–73; Romanini, "Scultura nella *Langobardia Major*," 1–36; Coroneo, *Scultura altomedievale in Italia*, 65–88; Lomartire, "Commacini e marmorarii," 190–204 and 206. On some workshops of marble workers active in *Langobardia maior* during



Figure 18. Carved slab with decorative palm motif, eighth century, baptistery, Albenga (photo: author).

can be found, however, on a number of capitals in the abbey of Farfa, in the Sabina, carved in the third quarter of the eighth century by craftsmen from Aquitaine, called there by powerful abbots capitalizing upon personal contacts with those distant territories, as attested by contemporary literary sources.⁶⁵

Craftsmen and Patrons

It has been acknowledged on more than one occasion, and for well-founded reasons, that there were outside influences on the carving of liturgical furniture in Rome at the end of the eighth century, with regard to certain themes or specific stylistic features. If the above-mentioned reliefs commissioned by Gregory III for the Vatican Basilica mark the

arrival in Rome of models developed in the Po Valley, architectural elements reused during the ninth century in the chapels of San Zenone in the church of Sta. Prassede and of Sta. Barbara in the church of SS. Quattro Coronati show strong stylistic links with the decoration of the basilica of San Salvatore in Spoleto and the Tempietto del Clitunno, two controversial monuments now dated almost unanimously to the beginning of the eighth century and attributed to the patronage of the ducal family.⁶⁶ These influences could have reached Rome directly from *Langobardia maior* and the duchy of Spoleto, or through the Exarchate, the Pentapolis, Tuscia, and the Sabina.⁶⁷

For the *cathedra* under discussion, it is also possible to hypothesize the work of *marmorarii* (marble workers) suitably knowledgeable about the prevalent motifs in northern Italy during the eighth century. This channel—direct or indirect—can be explained by the phenomenon of itinerant craftsmen, single or in groups, who traveled the roads of the peninsula

the eighth century, see: Silvana Casartelli Novelli, “Confini e bottega “provinciale” delle Marittime nel divenire della scultura longobarda dai primi del secolo VIII all’anno 774,” *Storia dell’Arte* 32 (1978): 11–22; Ciampoltrini, “*Pulchris ecce micat nitentes marmoris decus*”; Ettore Napione, “Una maestranza altomedievale di lapidisti: l’officina berico-benacense,” *Hortus Artium Mediaevalium* 8 (2002): 325–36; Eleonora Destefanis, *La diocesi di Piacenza e il monastero di Bobbio. Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, vol. 18 (2008); Saverio Lomartire, “Brescia e Pavia nell’VIII secolo: emergenze monumentali e problemi aperti,” in *L’VIII secolo: un secolo inquieto*, 115–25; Monica Ibsen, “Scultura lapidea altomedievale nei territori di Brescia, Bergamo, Mantova,” in *La via Carolingia: uomini e idee sulle strade d’Europa; dal sistema viario al sistema informativo*, ed. Paola Marina De Marchi and Stefano Pilato (Mantua: SAP Società archeologica, 2012), 293–307.

65. See Fabio Betti, *La diocesi di Sabina. Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, vol. 17 (2005), 66–67 and 72–76 (nos. 4, 10 and 12); idem, “Sculture altomedievali,” 1–2, 19–20, and 35–37.

66. For the artistic relations between Rome and Spoleto during the eighth century, see John Mitchell, “L’arte nell’Italia longobarda e nell’Europa carolingia,” in *Il futuro dei Longobardi*, 173–87; Paroli, “La scultura a Roma,” 135–36; Ballardini, “Scultura a Roma,” 145–46. Judson J. Emerick, *The Tempietto del Clitunno near Spoleto* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 1998) and Carola Jäggi, *San Salvatore in Spoleto: Studien zur spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Architektur Italiens* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1998) have argued for an early medieval dating for San Salvatore in Spoleto and the Tempietto del Clitunno: different proposals on these two buildings can be read now in *La basilica di San Salvatore a Spoleto*, ed. Massimiliano Bassetti, Letizia Ermini Pani, and Enrico Menestò, vols. 1–3 (Spoleto: CISAM, 2012).

67. See note 63 above.

in search of clients, thus spreading figurative themes and carving techniques across regions.⁶⁸ Cogent evidence for this has come directly from the study of the early medieval architectural sculptures of the abbey of Farfa. A decisive role in the migration of these craftsmen to central Italy must be attributed to the progressive conquest during the eighth century by Lombards of lands increasingly close to Rome, such as southern Tuscia, the Pentapolis, and the Sabina, with subsequent spread in those regions of the artistic vocabulary derived from Po Valley and Spoleto models. Scrutiny of the surviving artifacts—such as the fragments mentioned from Osimo, Otricoli, and Monteleone in the Sabina, or the altar of Narni—indicates how the commissions given by new Lombard lords had favored the arrival in those areas of *marmorarii* from both the north and the duchy of Spoleto.⁶⁹ Moreover, in those same decades the kingdom of Pavia and the duchy of Spoleto experienced a lively artistic flowering that left important traces in the sphere of carved liturgical furniture, in major urban centers as well as in rural areas.⁷⁰ However, examination of our *cathedra* reveals a more com-



Figure 19. Transenna decorated with knotted circles consisting of triple-grooved bands containing roses and lilies, late eighth century, Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, Rome (photo: author).

68. See Carlo Guido Mor, “Gli artigiani nell’Alto Medioevo (con particolare riguardo ai riflessi giuspubblicistici),” in *Artigianato e tecnica nella società dell’Alto Medioevo occidentale. Atti della XVIII Settimana di Studio del CISAM* (Spoleto: CISAM, 1971), 195–213, at 205–7; Lomartire, “Commacini e marmorarii,” 167–80. On this topic, though dealing with a later time span, see also Saverio Lomartire, “Mobilità/stanzialità dei cantieri artistici nel Medioevo italiano e trasmissione delle competenze,” in *Circolazione di uomini e scambi culturali tra città (secoli XII–XIV). Atti del XXIII Convegno internazionale di studi, Pistoia, 13–16 maggio 2011* (Rome: Viella, 2013), 367–431.

69. This is the conclusion of Ciampoltrini, “*Pulchris ecce micat nitentes marmoris decus*,” 43–48 (examining several complexes of sculpture from the first half of the eighth century in Chiusi and in Sovana, two cities belonging to the Lombard kingdom), and of Betti, “*Sculpture altomedievali*,” 1–2, 19–20, and 35–37 (describing the sculptures of the second half of the eighth century from the abbey of Farfa, which in that period was under the protection of the dukes of Spoleto), and likewise Betti in “*Lapicidi longobardi*,” 47–63 (on the eighth-century materials surviving in the Pentapolis, annexed to *Langobardia maior*, in the Piceno area, and in the Sabina, also within the orbit of the duchy of Spoleto).

70. Summaries in: Adriano Peroni, “L’arte nell’età longobarda. Una traccia,” in *Magistra barbaritas: i barbari in Italia* (Milan: Scheiwiller, 1984), 229–97, at 282–92; Carlo Bertelli, “Aspetti dell’arte promossa dai Longobardi in Italia nell’VIII secolo,” in *Il futuro dei Longobardi*, 189–95; Coroneo, *Scultura altomedievale in Italia*, 65–88; Valentino Pace, “L’Italia Langobardorum, Roma e altrove. La grandezza di un secolo,” in *L’VIII secolo: un secolo inquieto*, 21–24. See also Monica Ibsen, “Tra clero e aristocrazie: riflessioni sulla committenza della scultura liturgica nelle chiese rurali,” in *Archeologia e società tra tardo Antico e Alto Medioevo. Atti del 12° Seminario sul tardo Antico e l’Alto Medioevo, Padova, 29 settembre–1 ottobre 2005*, ed. Gian Pietro Brogiolo and Alexandra Chavarria Arnau (Mantua: SAP Società Archeologica, 2007), 147–63.

plex context not reducible to the notion that immigrant craftsmen simply contributed to the local tradition of Rome.

First, the iconographic tradition to which the *cathedra* belongs is typically Roman. The selection of symbolic themes recurs so frequently in liturgical furniture carved between the final decades of the eighth century and the early decades of the ninth as to suggest that precise guidelines were given by patrons. Second, the link with the carvings still extant in Sta. Maria in Cosmedin from the time of Hadrian I seems too specific to derive from a shared patrimony of figurative themes. Direct examination of the *cathedra* has confirmed that the points of contact are not limited to iconography alone: even the marks left by the tools are identical to those on the peacock relief in Sta. Maria in Cosmedin (Fig. 13), which leads to the conclusion that the same craftsmen carved both, consequently dating our *cathedra* to the years of Hadrian’s papacy.⁷¹

On the *cathedra*, as has been noted, the abstract motifs seem secondary to the figurative, and the same is true for the Sta. Maria in Cosmedin relief. In fact, the basilica retains two additional carved *transennae* entirely covered by geometric and plant motifs: a carpet of knotted circles, consisting of triple-grooved bands containing roses and lilies in one case (Fig. 19);⁷² and spiral branches containing pinwheel ro-

71. See the examination of the marks left by tools on the liturgical furniture of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin: Macchiarella, “Seminario,” 268–75 and figs. 242–45; idem, “Note sulla scultura in marmo,” 293–97 and fig. 257.

72. Melucco Vaccaro, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 3, 154–56 (nos. 109–10: mid-ninth century); Macchiarella, “Seminario,” 273–74; idem,



Figure 20. Transenna decorated with an unusual Tree of Life surrounded by pinwheel rosettes, late eighth century, Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, Rome (photo: Norwegian Institute in Rome, University of Oslo, inv. no. C_3_102_151).

settes set on either side of a trunk-like form, from which five branches spring radially—probably an unusual Tree of Life—on the other (Fig. 20). It is possible to identify symbolic representations of paradise in the decorative forms of both reliefs, as in many Lombard relief carvings (Fig. 21). They express in an abstract vocabulary the same idea depicted in a figurative language on the *transenna* with peacocks and *cantharus*, as well as on the armrests of our *cathedra*.⁷³ Most scholars agree in dating these slabs to the time of Hadrian I and, consequently, in connecting both to the late eighth-century *pergula* inscribed with the pope's name (Fig. 16). This would indicate that the workshop that created the peacock relief was at the same time developing solutions in which abstract motifs were predominant, as in the case of the contemporary episcopal throne of Sant'Adriano in Foro now in the Crypta Balbi Museum (Fig. 7).⁷⁴ Such a multiplicity

of stylistic trends seems to confirm the coexistence in Rome of *marmorarii* of diverse origins and training, as in the well-documented case of the abbey of Farfa. And, for that matter, it is easy to see that different hands worked on the reliefs of the two armrests of the *cathedra*; perhaps the dimensions given to the slabs when they were recarved, in Liutprandean feet, indicate that these same *marmorarii* had contacts in the Po Valley.⁷⁵

The workshop active in Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, to which the carved fragments found in the temple of Portunus have also been attributed, presents features that distinguish its sculptures from those made for the other two commissions by Hadrian I: the liturgical furniture of Sant'Adriano in Foro and the Domusculia Capracorum at Veio, which are possibly the products of a single workshop.⁷⁶ Both of these series of sculptures are attributable, on the basis of epigraphic evidence, to the patronage of the pope, whereas the architrave of the *pergula* of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin names as its commissioner a *Gregorius no[tarius] (?)*, identifiable perhaps with a powerful layman in the papal Curia, mentioned in Hadrian I's biography for his appointment to the prestigious post of *secundicerius* and for making a generous donation to the *domusculia* of San Leucio.⁷⁷

Sta. Maria in Cosmedin was already in use in the sixth and seventh centuries as a chapel annexed to a deaconry, one of the welfare centers that sprang up on the initiative of the Church in the urban area during the early Middle Ages. Pope Hadrian I had it rebuilt to a monumental size, doubling its footprint. He turned it into a basilica with three naves, each terminating in an apse, and added an oratory crypt beneath the presbytery for housing a rich collection of relics. Although restored many times over the centuries, the walls of the present church are from this phase of expansion.

"Note sulla scultura in marmo," 296–97 (suggested date: time of Hadrian I, which I accept); Paroli, "La scultura a Roma," 138–39.

73. On the image of *paradisus* expressed in abstract forms in early medieval art, see Casartelli Novelli, "Horror vacui versus amor infiniti," 749–86; James Trilling, "Medieval Interlace Ornament: The Making of a Cross-Cultural Ornament," *Arte Medievale* 9, no. 2 (1995): 59–86, at 61–70 and 73–76; Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidici," 405–6; Silvana Casartelli Novelli, "Organicità e astrazione: statuto e funzione del linguaggio altomedievale delle immagini alla luce della macrostoria del segnico," in *Medioevo: arte e storia*, 191–207.

74. The date of the episcopal throne is based in part on that of the fragments. See Paroli, "La scultura in marmo," 100–108; Paroli's dating of the liturgical furniture of Sta. Cornelia to the time of Hadrian I (with which I agree) is challenged by Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidici," 403–4 and 408 (who proposes a date around the mid-ninth century).

75. A similar hypothesis was already proposed, in fairly unequivocal fashion, by Casartelli Novelli, "Confini e bottega 'provinciale,'" 18 and 20–22, whereas Russo, "La recinzione del presbiterio," 33n88, is decidedly against what he considers a simplification. Unfortunately, the furnishings in Sta. Maria in Cosmedin survive in too fragmentary a state to be measured with precision, which prevents us from knowing whether they also were cut according to the Liutprandean foot.

76. Paroli, "La scultura in marmo," 100–111; Flavia De Rubeis and Giulia Bordi, "Pergulae di Adriano I (772–95)," in *Roma dall'Antichità al Medioevo*, 483–86; Ballardini, "Scultura a Roma," 141–42.

77. Melucco Vaccaro, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 3, 152–53 (no. 106). The inscription reads: *[de don]is D(e)i et S(an)c(ta)e D(e)i Genitricis Ma[riae] / [temporib]us do(mi)n(i) Adriani papae ego Gregorius no[tarius?] / [– – –]*. For a possible identification of this *Gregorius*, see De Rubeis and Bordi, "Pergulae di Adriano I," 485–86, and Ballardini, "Scultura a Roma," 141–42.



Figure 21. Carved relief with symbolic representation of paradise, late eighth century, baptistery, Albenga (photo: author).

sion (Fig. 22).⁷⁸ It is not surprising that such a prominent figure as Gregory should assume the patronage of the furniture, probably by hiring craftsmen then present in the city or the surrounding area, and who might also have been at work in the nearby church of Sta. Maria de Secundicerio. The workshop may have been formed there of *marmorarii* looking for employment on the work sites then opening in Rome and its suburbs.⁷⁹

Stational Liturgy and Diaconiae

The undeniably strong link between the *cathedra* and the furniture of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin naturally raises the question of whether the throne was carved for this building. Its creators could in fact have worked in many other Roman

churches over the same decades, yet one compelling factor supports the notion that Sta. Maria in Cosmedin must have had a bishop's throne in the late eighth century.

At the behest of Hadrian I, this and other churches linked to deaconries (*diaconiae*) were included among the stational ones (*stationes* in Latin) where the pope went to celebrate Mass on set days during the year.⁸⁰ Historians have given the name "stational liturgy" to a custom that developed in the Roman Church between the fifth and seventh centuries out of the need to promote a strong sense of unity between the faithful and their bishop. The pope did not limit himself to celebrating the liturgy in his episcopal church, the great Lateran Basilica, but, following a precise calendar, he presided over the liturgy in other churches of the city and its suburbs accompanied by his clergy, received by those serving in the various places of worship. The basilicas of the Lateran, Sta. Maria Maggiore, and St. Peter's were the three main buildings for this liturgy, but smaller churches (titular basilicas,

78. *Le Liber pontificalis*. Texte, introduction, commentary by Louis Duchesne, I (Paris: Thorin, 1886), XCIII, 72, 507: *Diaconia vero sanctae Dei genitricis semperque virginis Mariae quae appellatur Cosmidin, dudum breve in edificiis existens, sub ruinis posita, maximum monumentum de Tubertinos tufos super ea dependens, per annum circuli plurima multitudo populi congregans, multorumque lignorum struem incendens, demolivit. Simulque collectio rudium mundans, a fundamentis aedificans, praedictamque basilicam ultro citroque spatiose largans, tresque absidas in ea costruens praecipuus antistes, veram Cosmidin amplissima noviter reparavit*. On the church, see Giovanni Battista Giovenale, *La basilica di S. Maria in Cosmedin* (Rome: Sansaini, 1927); Richard Krautheimer, Wolfgang Frankl, and Spencer Corbett, *Corpus basilicarum Christianarum Romae. Le basiliche cristiane di Roma (IV–IX sec.)*, vol. 2 (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1962), 279–310; Gemma Fusiello, *Santa Maria in Cosmedin a Roma* (Rome: Quasar, 2011).

79. For the role played as patrons by rich laymen in the service of the Roman Curia at the time of Pope Hadrian I, see Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City*, 112–13.

80. Johann Peter Kirsch, *Die Stationskirchen des Missale Romanum* (Freiburg: Herder, 1926); Victor Saxer, "L'utilisation par la liturgie de l'espace urbain et suburbain: l'exemple de Rome dans l'Antiquité et le haut Moyen Âge," in *Actes du XIe Congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne*, Lyon, Vienne, Grenoble, Genève, Aoste, 21–28 septembre 1986, vol. 2 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1989), 917–1033; Antoine Chavasse, *La liturgie de la ville de Rome du Ve au VIIIe siècle: une liturgie conditionnée par l'organisation de la vie in urbe et extra muros* (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 1993); De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 27–106; Patrizia Carmassi, "La liturgia romana tra il V e il IX secolo," in *Roma dall'Antichità al Medioevo*, 144–53; John F. Romano, *Liturgy and Society in Early Medieval Rome* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 109–39. On the inclusion of the larger *diaconiae* among the stational churches, see in particular De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 58–59 and 62, and Luchterhandt, "Rinascita a Roma," 327–28.



Figure 22. Interior view toward the altar, showing the nave walls erected by Pope Hadrian I (772–95), Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, Rome (photo: author).

martyria, devotional churches, and even the chapels of the *diaconiae*) played a significant role in this system of itinerant masses.⁸¹ To reaffirm the bond between the pope and the faithful, on a material as well as a spiritual level, had been considered crucial in Rome since the time of Constantine, when the increasing number of converts had made impossible the participation of all the faithful in a single Mass. In the fourth century, for example, the eucharistic bread (*fermentum*) was consecrated on Sunday morning in the Lateran Basilica, and from there taken to the other urban churches for the Mass.⁸² Then in the fifth century, the *cathedra episcopalis* usually kept in the Lateran Basilica was transported from time to time (along with the sacred vessels) to the churches where the pope was to celebrate the liturgy.⁸³ It is no exaggeration to say that, during the early Middle Ages, the life of Rome was given its rhythm by the religious calendar, in turn adjusted to match the functions of the stationary liturgy, and that every citizen was engaged in one way or another in this long series of celebrations.⁸⁴

By the eighth century, the papal Mass had become a grandiose and complicated ritual. It began with processions of the clergy accompanied by crosses, candlesticks, and censers, was punctuated by the singing of the papal *schola cantorum*, and above all, it took place in a carefully conceived architec-

81. See the calendars published by Saxer, "L'utilisation par la liturgie," 1000–1008, and De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 805–7.

82. Chavasse, *La liturgie de la ville de Rome*, 21–26; De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 30 and 34–35.

83. De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 69–70; Romano, *Liturgy and Society*, 33–34.

84. As shown by Romano's recent contribution, *Liturgy and Society*.

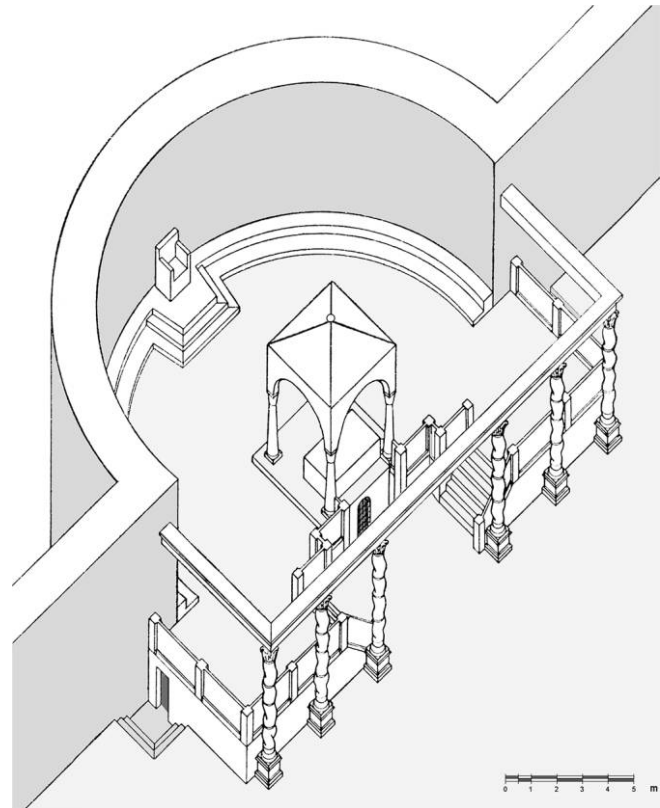


Figure 23. Reconstruction of the presbytery in St. Peter's as it would have appeared during the papacy of Gregory the Great (590–604); visible are the pergula, the ciborium with the altar, and the cathedra, Rome (author's drawing after Jocelyn Toynbee and John Ward Perkins, *The Shrine of St. Peter and the Vatican Excavations* [London/New York/Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956], fig. 22).

tural setting in which the liturgical furniture was a fundamental element.⁸⁵ Undoubtedly at the time of Gregory the Great (590–604), in the major basilicas intended for the papal liturgy—the Lateran, St. Peter's, and Sta. Maria Maggiore—the presbytery area was separated from the space of the congregation by a screen made of carved stone slabs and colonnettes supporting an architrave. Within this carefully demarcated space stood the altar, monumentalized by a *ciborium* and surrounded by stalls for the clergy. Most importantly, the pope's *cathedra* would have taken center stage among such seating, and, as already noted above, would likely have been raised on a dais accessed by steps (Fig. 23).⁸⁶ Seated

85. For a detailed description of the stationary Mass, see De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 66–104.

86. Mathews, "An Early Roman Chancel Arrangement," 80; De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 66–104, 117–29, 377–94, and 470–85; Federico Guidobaldi, "I cyboria d'altare a Roma fino al IX secolo," in *Arredi di culto e disposizioni liturgiche*, 55–69; idem, "Struttura e

atop it in a dominant position, the pope thus presided over the whole celebration, so that—as contemporary sources suggest—the *cathedra* together with the altar would have constituted the visual centerpiece of the Mass.⁸⁷ The same sources also state that only the pope was permitted to sit on the *cathedra*; in his absence, the celebrant had to use one of the seats in the choir stalls.⁸⁸

The same arrangement of furniture was replicated, in more or less opulent form, in all the stational churches of Rome.⁸⁹ The late eighth-century fragments preserved in the basilica of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, salvaged during restoration work directed at the end of the nineteenth century by the architect Giovanni Battista Giovenale, enable us to reconstruct with certainty a *pergula* consisting of marble slabs, colonnettes and architrave, and perhaps also a *ciborium* with arches (Fig. 24).⁹⁰ Today, at the center of the apse stands a monumental throne donated on the occasion of the rededication of the altar by Pope Callixtus II (1119–24)⁹¹ by the *camerarius* (chamberlain) Alfano in the year 1123, along with a new presbytery screen. What remained of the previous furniture was probably dismantled at that time, but it is interesting to note that among the early medieval fragments

cronologia delle recinzioni liturgiche nelle chiese di Roma dal VI al IX secolo,” in *ibid.*, 81–99; Victor Saxer, “Recinzioni liturgiche secondo le fonti letterarie,” in *ibid.*, 71–79; Federico Guidobaldi, “Strutture liturgiche negli edifici cristiani di Roma dal IV al VII secolo,” in *Materiali e tecniche dell’edilizia paleocristiana a Roma*, ed. Margherita Cecchelli (Rome: De Luca, 2001), 171–90; Romano, *Liturgy and Society*, 33–34.

87. De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 76–77, 80–83, 85–86, 92–93, and 99; *idem*, “L’altare nelle chiese di Roma,” 985–89.

88. De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 77; Romano, *Liturgy and Society*, 34.

89. In general, see Sible De Blaauw, “The Lateran and Vatican Altar Dispositions in Medieval Roman Church Interiors. A Case of Models in Church Planning,” in *Cinquante années d’études médiévales. À la confluence de nos disciplines. Actes du Colloque à l’occasion du cinquantième du CESC, Poitiers, 1–4 septembre 2003*, ed. Claude Arrigno, Marie H. Debiès, Claudio Galderisi, and Eric Palazzo (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 201–17; *idem*, “Liturgical Features of Roman Churches: Manifestations of the Church of Rome?,” in *Chiese locali e chiese regionali nell’Alto Medioevo. Atti della LXI Settimana di Studio del CISAM, Spoleto, 4–9 aprile 2013* (Spoleto: CISAM, 2014), 321–38. See then the case, researched in depth, of the basilica of Sta. Prassede, rebuilt in the time of Paschal I: Judson J. Emerick, “Focusing on the Celebrant: The Column Display inside Santa Prassede,” in *Arredi di culto e disposizioni liturgiche*, 129–59.

90. Giovenale, *La basilica di S. Maria in Cosmedin*, 313–20; Melucco Vaccaro, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 3, 146–62 (nos. 102–26); Macchiarella, “Note sulla scultura in marmo,” 293–97 (with a suggested reconstruction of the *pergula*, accepted here).

91. Giovenale, *La basilica di S. Maria in Cosmedin*, 174–76; Fucsiello, *Santa Maria in Cosmedin*, 116–21 (with an analysis of the furniture made for that occasion).

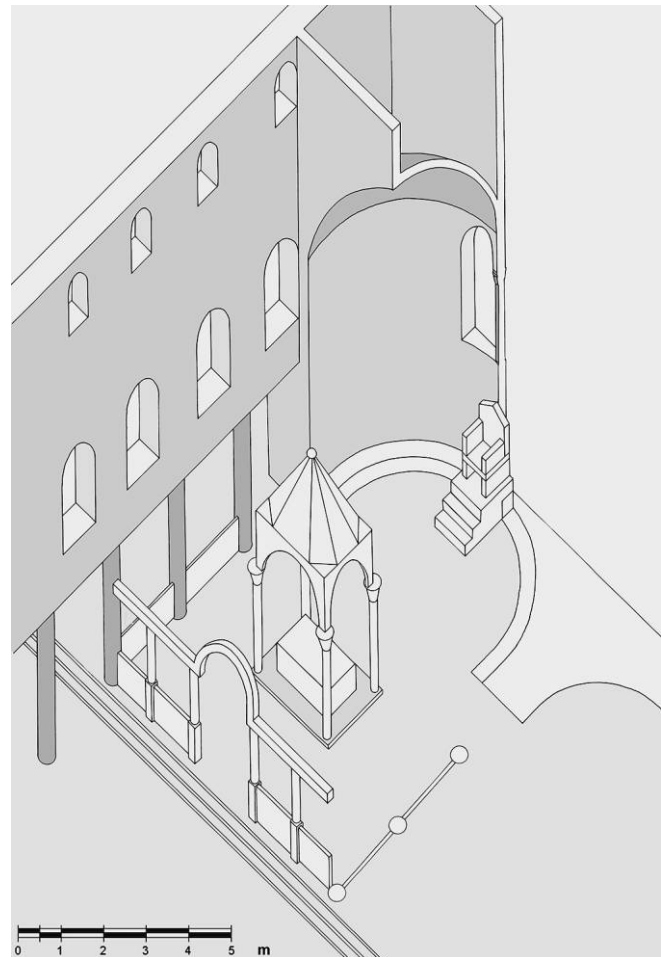


Figure 24. Reconstruction of the presbytery in Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, Rome, as it would have appeared during the papacy of Hadrian I (772–95); visible are the *pergula*, the *ciborium* with the altar, and the *cathedra* (drawing by author).

salvaged by Giovenale, none could have come from a *cathedra episcopalis*, as he pointed out.⁹²

During his long pontificate, Hadrian I had a special regard for the *diaconiae* of the city, since they were places where the poor and pilgrims could find shelter, food, and welfare services, as well as spiritual support.⁹³ His biography

92. Giovenale, *La basilica di S. Maria in Cosmedin*, 175; he suggested (without evidence) that the two arms of the present medieval *cathedra*, decorated with lions, might come from the ninth-century one.

93. On the Roman *diaconiae*, the most recent contributions are Ugo Falesiedi, *Le diaconie. I servizi assistenziali nella chiesa antica* (Rome: Istituto Patristico Augustinianum, 1995); Alessandra Milella, “Le diaconie romane tra il VI e l’VIII secolo,” in *Cultura e promozione umana. La cura del corpo e dello spirito dai primi secoli cristiani al Medioevo: contributi e attualizzazioni ulteriori. Convegno internazionale di studi, Oasi “Maria Santissima” di Troina, 29 ottobre–1 novembre 1999*, ed. Enrico Dal Covolo and Isidoro Giannetto (Troina:

in the *Liber pontificalis* states that in this period, at Hadrian's initiative, these welfare facilities were vast complexes that included, in addition to the church, dwellings for the monks in charge of prayer and reception, storehouses for provisions, kitchens, even *balnea* (baths).⁹⁴ The embankment of the Tiber near Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, known in medieval times as *ripa Graeca* because of the concentration of eastern Mediterranean merchants, had been a major point of transit since Antiquity: it fed the docks and warehouses of the river port, the Tiber island, and various bridges, and was situated close to the markets of the Forum Boarium and the Forum Holitorium, as well as to the monumental areas of the Palatine and the Circus Maximus. Other *diaconiae* had existed in the same area since the seventh century, such as that of San Teodoro, linked like Sta. Maria in Cosmedin to communities from the eastern Mediterranean.⁹⁵ The location in such a strategic urban area justified the commitment of lavish funds by Pope Hadrian to renovating the structures of this *diaconia*, creating a splendor that can still be imagined; marble *sectilia* (small tiles) decorated the floor, while icons and lamps were placed above the architrave of the *pergula* at the entry to the presbytery;⁹⁶ nor should one forget the rich collection of

relics brought from suburban cemeteries to the purpose-built crypt.⁹⁷ The existence at the end of the eighth century of a *secretarium* (the room in which the pope robed before Mass) attached to the church is attested by contemporary sources, confirming that it served at that time as a major *statio* of the papal liturgy.⁹⁸

As we have seen, our *cathedra* has a decorative apparatus consistent in every respect with that developed on the carved reliefs in the basilica. Even if it did not originate in the same setting, it is safe to assume that a comparable object (part of the furniture commissioned about three centuries earlier by Gregory the *notarius*) stood in the position occupied today by the *cathedra* donated in 1123 by the *camerarius* Alfano.

Conclusions

What has been said so far suggests some reflections that will help set the present *cathedra* in the artistic context in which it was made.

Written sources and archaeological data agree that Hadrian I (772–95) stimulated a vast reorganization of the material patrimony of the Church of Rome. His concern for the city *diaconiae* has already been mentioned; his biography in the *Liber pontificalis* further lists in great detail not only the churches restored or rebuilt by this pope, but also the infrastructure—such as aqueducts and city walls—on which he lavished attention, with the aim of restoring services essential to everyday life in Rome, as well as its monumental décor.⁹⁹

Oasi, 2000), 83–99; Anna Maria Giuntella, “Gli spazi dell’assistenza e della meditazione,” in *Roma nell’Alto Medioevo*, 2:639–91; Cecchelli et al., “L’assetto culturale,” 393–405; Hendrik W. Dey, “*Diaconiae*, *xenodochia*, *hospitalia* and Monasteries: ‘Social Security’ and the Meaning of Monasticism in Early Medieval Rome,” *Early Medieval Europe* 16, no. 4 (2008): 398–422.

94. See Milella, “Le diaconie romane,” 87–88; Cecchelli et al., “L’assetto culturale,” 393–405. See the case, well researched in terms of its archaeology, of the *diaconia* of Sant’Angelo in Pescheria, founded in the second half of the eighth century in the temples of Apollo Sosiano and Bellona: Roberto Meneghini, “Edilizia pubblica e riuso dei monumenti classici a Roma nell’Alto Medioevo: l’area dei templi di Apollo Sosiano e Bellona e la diaconia di S. Angelo in Pescheria,” in *Primo Congresso nazionale di Archeologia Medievale*, Pisa, 29–31 maggio 1997, ed. Sauro Gelichi (Florence: All’Insegna del Giglio, 1997), 51–57.

95. Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City*, 81–82, 238–41, and 273–75; Milella, “Le diaconie romane,” 88–92; Maya Maskarinec, “Foreign Saints at Home in Eighth- and Ninth-Century Rome: The Patrocinia of Diaconiae, Xenodochia, and Greek Monasteries,” in *Cuius patrocinio tota gaudet regio. Saints’ Cults and the Dynamics of Regional Cohesion*, ed. Stanislava Kuzmova, Ana Marinković, and Trpimir Vedriš (Zagreb: Hagiotheca, 2014), 21–38.

96. The presbytery area has some fragments of the ninth-century marble pavement, encased within the later cosmatesque covering; see Federico Guidobaldi and Alessandra Guiglia Guidobaldi, *Pavimenti marmorei di Roma dal IV al IX secolo* (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1983), 461–68. The presence of icons and candlesticks above the architrave is suggested by the grooves present in the upper facade: see Paroli, “La scultura a Roma,” 139. For the appearance of the church rebuilt by Pope Hadrian, see Michelle Beghelli and Joan Pinar Gil, “Corredo e arredo

liturgico nelle chiese tra VIII e IX secolo. Suppellettili antiche e moderne, locali e importate tra archeologia, fonti scritte e fonti iconografiche,” *Jahrbuch des Römisch-germanischen Zentralmuseum Mainz* 60 (2013): 697–762.

97. On the crypt and its relics, see Franz Alto Bauer, “Papst Hadrian I. und die Krypta von S. Maria in Cosmedin,” *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 32 (1997): 135–78, at 135–38; idem, *Das Bild der Stadt Rom im Frühmittelalter. Papststiftungen im Spiegel des Liber pontificalis von Gregor dem Dritten bis zu Leo dem Dritten* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2004), 132–37.

98. Fusiello, *Santa Maria in Cosmedin*, 102–5. About seventy years after the work done by Hadrian I, Pope Nicholas I (858–67) had a papal palace built alongside the church, one of the first known in early medieval Rome after those of the Lateran and the Vatican, and evidence of the growing importance of this complex for the purposes of the pontifical liturgy.

99. *Le Liber pontificalis* XCIII, 486–523. See Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City*, 109–42; Letizia Ermini Pani, “*Renovatio murorum* tra programma urbanistico e restauro conservativo: Roma e il Ducato Romano,” in *Committenti e produzione artistico-letteraria nell’Alto Medioevo occidentale. Atti della XXXIX Settimana del CISAM, Spoleto, 4–10 aprile 1991*, Settimane di Studio del CISAM 39, vol. 2 (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1992), 485–530; Franz Alto Bauer, “Die Bau- und Stiftungspolitik der Päpste Hadrian I. (772–95) und Leo III. (795–816),” in 799: *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*,

Nor did Hadrian neglect the shrines of the martyrs lying outside the walls, though he authorized the removal of relics to urban churches (such as Sta. Maria in Cosmedin) in the event that their structures could not be restored.¹⁰⁰ Increasing Church revenues was also among the pope's objectives, leading him to devote particular attention to the reorganization of its Italian properties, in particular those in Lazio, and establishing farms such as the Sta. Cornelia *domusculata*; the income and provisions from these properties supported, among other things, funding for the charitable work carried out by the *diaconiae*.¹⁰¹ In short, Pope Hadrian was an outstanding organizer, and the construction sites opened at his behest must have attracted many craftsmen in addition to those already present in Rome; they would have played a key role in the development of Roman architecture and art in the following decades, when the production of liturgical furniture was to reach a level unparalleled in early medieval Rome with respect to quantity and quality.¹⁰²

Hadrian I was able to implement such ambitious projects by making the most of a dual shift of power: the annexation of *Langobardia maior* by the Frankish kingdom in 774, with the concomitant subjugation of the duchy of Spoleto (putting an end to the Lombard threat which had held Rome in a vice for decades); and the consolidation of the alliance with Charlemagne, a powerful ruler who offered himself as protector of the Church of Rome in place of the heretical emperors of Byzantium, proponents of iconoclasm.¹⁰³ After nearly a century

of unbroken military conflict and theological controversy, the bishop of Rome acquired uncontested predominance in Carolingian Europe, which was at that time in the ascendant. Hadrian came from a noble Roman family that had worked closely with previous popes, sponsors of an alliance with the Franks, but above all champions of the primacy and autonomy of the Church of Rome. A famous letter written to Charlemagne in 778 shows not only that he claimed spiritual primacy, but also that he aspired to political dominion (*potestas*) over Lazio, the Exarchate, and the Pentapolis, territories that in his eyes formed the *patrimonium Petri*, designated by the pope with the meaningful binomial *Sancta Dei ecclesia* and *respublica Romanorum*.¹⁰⁴

The premises for such a claim are given in the *Constitutum Constantini*, the famous forged donation, the redaction of which is dated by some historians precisely to Hadrian's pontificate.¹⁰⁵ Liturgy and the arts were employed in those decades to support the conception of the temporal power of the pope: in the stational Mass, for example, acclamations to the pontiffs were introduced that had been drawn from

514–28; idem, “Il rinnovamento di Roma sotto Adriano I alla luce del *Liber pontificalis*. Immagine e realtà,” in *Il “Liber pontificalis” e la storia materiale. Atti del Colloquio internazionale, Roma, 21–22 febbraio 2002*, ed. Herman Geertman (Assen/Rome: Van Gorcum, 2003), 189–204; idem, *Das Bild der Stadt Rom*, 43–46; Roberto Meneghini and Riccardo Santangeli Valenzani, *Roma nell'altomedioevo. Topografia e urbanistica della città dal V al X secolo* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2004), 54–57, 67–68, 91–98, 161–64, 195, and 220–25; Xavier Barral i Altet, “L’VIII secolo: da Giovanni VIII (701–705) ad Adriano I (772–795),” in *La committenza artistica dei papi a Roma nel Medioevo*, ed. Mario D’Onofrio (Rome: Viella, 2016), 204–09.

100. Lucrezia Spera, “Cantieri edilizi a Roma in età carolingia. Gli interventi di papa Adriano I (772–795) nei santuari delle catacombe. Strategie e modalità di intervento,” *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 73, no. 1 (1997): 185–254; Bauer, *Das Bild der Stadt Rom*, 132–44.

101. Federico Marazzi, *I “patrimonia Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae” nel Lazio (secoli IV–X). Struttura amministrativa e prassi gestionale* (Rome: Pliniana, 1988); idem, “Il *Liber pontificalis* e la fondazione delle *Domusculatae*,” in *Il “Liber pontificalis” e la storia materiale*, 167–88.

102. See Paroli, “La scultura in marmo,” 100–112; Melucco Vaccaro, “Le botteghe dei lapidici,” 402–8; Paroli, “La scultura a Roma,” 138–43.

103. See Ottorino Bertolini, “Adriano I,” in *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, vol. 1, 680–95; Florian Hartmann, *Hadrian I. (772–795). Frühmittel-*

alterliches Adelpapsttum und die Lösung Roms vom byzantinischen Kaiser (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2006). On the reaction of the popes to the iconoclastic policy of Byzantium, see Bauer, *Das Bild der Stadt Rom*, 49–67.

104. Hadrian's letter is published in *Codex Carolinus*, ed. Wilhelm Gundlach, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae*, vol. 3: *Epistolae Merovingici et Karolini aevi*, vol. 1 (Berlin: apud Weidmannos, 1892), no. 60; the paragraph in question is on p. 587, ll. 9–19. For a reconstruction and interpretation of the historical events, see Louis Duchesne, *I primi tempi dello Stato pontificio*, 2nd ed. (Turin: Einaudi, 1967), 61–75; David S. Sefton, “Pope Hadrian I and the Fall of the Kingdom of the Lombards,” *Catholic Historical Review* 65, no. 2 (1979): 206–20; Ottorino Bertolini, “Le origini del potere temporale e del dominio temporale dei papi,” in *I problemi dell'Occidente nel secolo VIII: 6–12 april 1972*, Settimane di Studio del CISAM, 20 (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1973), 231–55; Bauer, *Das Bild der Stadt Rom*, 91–119; Girolamo Arnaldi and Alberto Cadili, “Le donazioni e la formazione del Patrimonium Petri,” in *Costantino I. Enciclopedia costantiniana*, vol. 2, 523–40. For the claims over the former Byzantine lands presented by the pope to Charlemagne, see in particular Salvatore Cosentino, “Potere e autorità nell'Esarcato in età post-bizantina,” in *L'héritage byzantin en Italie (VIIIe–XIIe siècle)*, vol. 2: *Les cadres juridiques et sociaux et les institutions publiques*, ed. Jean-Marie Martin, Annick Peters-Custot, and Vivien Prigent (Rome: École française de Rome, 2012), 279–95.

105. Historians are not in full agreement on the date of the redaction of this text, though most attribute it to the second half of the eighth century: see the reevaluation of the question in Johannes Fried, “*Donation of Constantine*” and “*Constitutum Constantini*”: *The Misinterpretation of a Fiction and Its Original Meaning* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2007). Hartmann, *Hadrian I.*, 22, 182–95, and 298, presents cogent arguments in support of a dating to the time of Hadrian I.

Byzantine imperial ceremony;¹⁰⁶ Leo III, Hadrian's successor, saw to the creation in the church of Sta. Susanna and in two *triclinia* in the Lateran Palace, of a series of mosaics in which he himself appeared next to Charlemagne, St. Peter, and Constantine.¹⁰⁷ It is in this imperial context—redesigned to the advantage of the Church—that we must assess the symbolic significance of the *cathedra* under discussion here. What Hadrian and Leo laid claim to went beyond spiritual power (symbolized by the *cathedra* on which the popes had sat since the second century, from the fourth renamed *sedes apostolica*), even beyond the rank of senior Roman magistrate (symbolized by the *sella curulis* granted to Sylvester by Constantine); it was political rule—namely *potestas*—and, at the same time, the right to legitimize other temporal sovereigns. It is probably not a coincidence that the *Liber pontificalis* mentions a papal throne in the biographies of Hadrian's successors: in Valentin's (827) it is called *pontificale thronum*; in Benedict III's (855–58), *pontificale solium*; and in Nicholas I's (858–67), *apostolicum solium*.¹⁰⁸ It is also striking that this form of *cathedra*—the first example of a papal seat with a triangular backrest—derives from the iconography of the empty throne and the *etoimasia*, with their high sacral value, as it seems no coincidence that its form was replicated so many times, in later centuries, for the thrones of emperors, kings, and abbots.¹⁰⁹

106. De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 76.

107. Hans Belting, "I mosaici dell'aula leonina come testimonianza della prima 'renovatio' dell'arte medievale di Roma," in *Roma e l'età carolingia*, 167–82; Manfred Luchterhandt, "Famulus Petri. Karl der Grosse in den römischen Mosaikenbildern Leos III," in 799: *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, 55–70; Bauer, *Das Bild der Stadt Rom*, 68–72 and 106–19; Mario D'Onofrio, "Leone III (795–816)," in idem, *La committenza artistica*, 213–18; Erik Thunø, *The Apse Mosaic in Early Medieval Rome: Time, Network, and Repetition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). For the politico-religious ideology conveyed in these images, see Paolo Delogu, "Leone III," in *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, vol. 1, 695–704.

108. *Le Liber pontificalis*. Texte, introduction, commentaire par Louis Duchesne, vol. 2 (Paris: Thorin, 1892), CII, 14–15, 72; CVI, 26–27, 140; CVII, 7–8, 152. See Maccarrone, "La 'cathedra Sancti Petri' nel Medioevo," 382.

109. See above, notes 37 and 40; see also Francesco Gandolfo, "La cattedra papale in età federiciana," in *Federico II e l'arte del Duecento italiano. Atti della III Settimana di studi di storia dell'arte medievale dell'Università di Roma*, Roma 1978, ed. Angiola Maria Romanini, vol. 1 (Galatina: Congedo, 1980), 339–66. The Christian image of the Tree of Life—present here—was also taken up several times to decorate imperial and royal thrones of the central Middle Ages: for example, that of the Magnaura palace in Constantinople, made at the time of Constantine VII (913–59), that of Goslar from the reign of Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV (1084–1106), and that of the Palatine chapel in Palermo (twelfth century); see Iacobini, "L'albero della vita," 283–84.



Figure 25. Transenna from the church of Sant'Adriano in Foro, Rome, papacy of Hadrian I (772–95), Crypta Balbi Museum, Rome (photo: Norwegian Institute in Rome, University of Oslo, inv. no. C_2_097_291).

Among the many liturgical furnishings donated by Hadrian I to Roman churches, the biography in the *Liber pontificalis* lists, as is its wont, only those in precious metal, but archaeologists have identified, on the basis of style and with the help of epigraphy, at least ten sets of carved stone commissions datable to his pontificate. To those already mentioned at Sta. Maria in Cosmedin (Figs. 13, 16, 17, 19, 20), Sta. Maria de Secundicerio, Sant'Adriano in Foro (Figs. 7, 25), and Sta. Cornelia (Domusculata Capracorum of Veio) should be added the reliefs at Sta. Maria in Trastevere (Fig. 14) and Sta. Pudenziana, the *ciborium* arches from Sant'Andrea Catabarbara and Sant'Ermite on the Via Salaria, two column bases at Sta. Prassede (Fig. 26) and, outside Rome, the fragments of liturgical furniture found in the church of Mola di Monte Gelato (Marazzano Romano, near Nepi).¹¹⁰ The carvings on these sculptures employ a limited decorative vocabulary including zoomorphic (peacocks drinking from a *cantharus*; one Agnus Dei), phytomorphic or floral (stylized palm trees, rosettes, grape vines), and geometric (rows of arches, interlaced arches, knotted circles sometimes grooved by diagonal lines, braids, interwoven bands) motifs. Evidently their mak-

110. See above, notes 43 and 44. For the fragments of liturgical furniture from Sta. Cornelia, see Melucco Vaccaro and Paroli, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 6, 234–92. For the column bases reused in the chapel of San Zenone in Sta. Prassede, erected at the time of Paschal I, see Pani Ermini, *La diocesi di Roma*, vol. 1, 143–44 (nos. 93–94). On the fragments from Mola di Monte Gelato, see John Osborne, "A Carolingian 'Agnus Dei' Relief from Mola di Monte Gelato, near Rome," *Gesta* 33, no. 2 (1994): 73–78; and idem, "The Early Medieval Sculpture," in *Excavations at the Mola di Monte Gelato. A Roman and Medieval Settlement in South Etruria*, ed. Timothy W. Potter and Anthony C. King (London: British School at Rome, 1997), 217–28.



Figure 26. Column base, chapel of San Zenone, Sta. Prassede, Rome, papacy of Hadrian I (772–95) (photo: author).

ers shared the same formal language, derived from local tradition, but also influenced by foreign sources. Another feature shared by this sculptural production lies in the small number of tools used in its making, essentially those identified here in the examination of our *cathedra*. This indicates a clean break with the tradition of the urban workshops of Classical times, which were still active in Late Antiquity. What appears to be a lack of continuity does not necessarily mean that the early medieval *marmorarii* were inept, but indicates rather that they derived their technical skills from a different tradition, developed beyond the walls of Rome.¹¹¹ Furthermore, if the slabs carved in the last three decades of the eighth century lack the perfect symmetry and careful formal rendering that characterized the furniture of the time of Paschal I or Gregory IV, it was undoubtedly in these decades that the artistic language of Carolingian Rome achieved its full realization.¹¹²

It is interesting to observe how figurative and abstract repertoires were brought together in the same location, espe-

cially in the sculptures of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, Sta. Maria in Trastevere, and Sant'Andrea Catabarbara in a sort of bilingualism that characterizes at least part of the sculpture of the time of Hadrian I. By contrast, in the material at Sant'Adriano in Foro, Sta. Pudenziana, and Sta. Cornelia, abstract motifs were predominant, a feature that anticipates the Roman production of the following decades and up to the second half of the ninth century.¹¹³ Variations in the use of figurative and abstract themes, apart from any difference in quality, provide evidence that several workshops must have been active in Rome and the surrounding territory at the time of Pope Hadrian, which seems likely considering the large number of construction sites and the involvement of wealthy laymen such as the *Gregorius* of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin. It remains uncertain whether the *marmorarii* active in that church were also involved in the decoration of Sta. Maria in Trastevere (Fig. 14) and Sant'Andrea Catabarbara, two churches for which the *Liber pontificalis* explicitly mentions work commissioned by Pope Hadrian.¹¹⁴ One or more other workshops seem to have created the furniture of Sant'Andrea in Foro, Sta. Pudenziana, and Sta. Cornelia, in which there are sometimes details that are very different in form but nevertheless correspond to the same stylistic types of geometric, floral, and interwoven motifs.¹¹⁵ As has been discussed, our *cathedra*

113. Letizia Pani Ermini, "Il ciborio della basilica di S. Ippolito all'Isola Sacra," in *Roma e l'età carolingia*, 337–44. Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidici," 406, cites the figurative-abstract bilingualism of Roman sculpture at the time of Hadrian I, which under the succeeding popes is said to have yielded to a clear predominance of interwoven geometrical motifs. On the relation between these two components in early medieval art, see the general essay by Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, *Organicità e astrazione* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1956), in part reassessed by Leslie Brubaker, "Aniconic Decoration in the Christian World (6th–11th Century): East and West," in *Cristianità d'occidente e cristianità d'oriente (secoli VI–XI). Atti della LI Settimana di Studio del CISAM, Spoleto, 24–30 aprile 2003* (Spoleto: CISAM, 2004), 573–90, and Casartelli Novelli, "Organicità e astrazione," 191–207.

114. See Pani Ermini, "Note sulla decorazione dei cibori," 120–21.

115. The fragments of liturgical furniture in Sta. Maria in Cosmedin and in Sta. Maria de Secundicerio are generally attributed to the same workshop: see Macchiarella, "Seminario," 269–71; idem, "Note sulla scultura in marmo," 297; Paroli, "La scultura in marmo," 102; eadem, "La scultura a Roma," 139. Lidia Paroli also attributes without hesitation the furniture of Sta. Cornelia to the same *marmorarii*: Paroli, "La scultura in marmo," 100–111 and "La scultura a Roma," 138–39; as against Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidici," 403–4 and 408. Formal links between the sculptures of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin and the arches of the *ciborium* of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara have been brought out by Pani Ermini, "Note sulla decorazione dei cibori," 120–21. The *transenna* with peacocks of Sta. Maria in Trastevere has been attributed to a contemporary but different workshop (Macchiarella, "Seminario," 270–71), as have the carvings from Sant'Adriano in Foro (De

111. See Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidici," 414–18; Ballardini, "Scultura a Roma," 142–45.

112. Thus Paroli, "La scultura in marmo," 100–104, and Melucco Vaccaro, "Le botteghe dei lapidici," 402–11.

must be attributed quite definitely to the workshop of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, but the discussion might go further, to the point of finding the same hand at work in the reliefs of the peacock *transenna* from that monument and the left armrest (Figs. 5, 13), while the right armrest seems to be the work of a different sculptor (Figs. 4, 13). This opens up new perspectives for the study of the internal organization of these workshops, as well as suggesting that it is possible to identify single artists behind the almost absolute anonymity of the *artifex* prevalent in those centuries.¹¹⁶

Rubeis and Bordi, “*Pergulae di Adriano I*,” 483–86; Ballardini, “*Scultura a Roma*,” 141–42). The same may be supposed for the fragments in Sant’Ermete and for the column bases of Sta. Prassede, on the basis of stylistic features and the type of carving.

116. As Paroli remarks, “*La scultura in marmo*,” 102, it is the secondary details that reveal the hand of a single sculptor. A case in

In the more than forty years that have passed since the first report of this throne, the study of early medieval Roman sculpture—and that of the West in general—has made significant progress. Much, however, remains to be investigated, and new leads may also come from artifacts that were unfortunately not considered in recent research. Such was the case of this *cathedra episcopalis*, which can now be fully restored to the corpus of the sculpture of Carolingian Rome.

point is the Master of the Capitals of Valle, a *marmorarius* active at the end of the eighth century in the church of Sta. Maria Alta at Valle d’Istria (Croatia), whose carvings—identified in the major centers of Carolingian power in western Istria—betray certain individual characteristics: see Miljenko Jurković, “Le maitre d’œuvre au haut Moyen Âge: l’exemple du Maître des chapiteaux de Bale,” in *Le plaisir de l’art du Moyen Âge. Commande, production et réception de l’œuvre d’art. Mélanges en hommage à Xavier Barral i Altet* (Paris: Picard, 2012), 494–500.